THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN CIVILIZATION

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF LEGAL ETHICS

THE PHILIPPINES AND INDIA

STUDENTS' LOGIC

SOCIAL LIFE IN INDIA *(In the Press)*

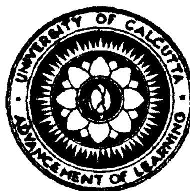
THE BUGBEAR OF CIVILIZATION

(In preparation)

THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN CIVILIZATION

BY

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To

THE PEOPLE OF INDIA

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

BY

DR. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE,

Former Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University

FOREWORD

Indian civilisation claims a hoary antiquity like the civilisations that dawned on the banks of the Nile and the Euphrates several millenniums before the Christian era, but unlike Egypt and Babylonia the cultural life of India has shown a movement, an adaptability and continuity that enabled it to withstand the ravages of time and survive in most of its essential features to the present day. The only parallel to this is supplied by the great country which draws its life and strength from the perennial waters of the Yang-tse-Kiang and the Hoang-ho. Centuries have rolled away. We are now living in a new world. The barriers raised by the hand of Nature and buttressed by the laws of man, no longer split up civilised humanity into isolated units; and the cultural life of the world to-day tends to stream through the same big channel. What is to be the position of India in this *Prayaga* of world culture ? It will not do to say that like the waters of some sequestered

rivulet which have served the countryside well for ages, Indian civilisation is best left in isolated eminence. If isolation is no longer possible, it will have to be proved that beneath its sluggish and apparently muddy surface the stream of Indian culture possesses a life-saving quality whose touch will curb the maddening impetuosity of torrents fresh from their mountain altitudes and turn frowning wilds into smiling gardens.

The time has come to evaluate Indian culture and its fitness to survive. This is the task that the author has essayed. The following pages bear witness to the range of his studies and his knowledge of the ways and manners of his own people. He has travelled in various climes and has had the benefit of a first-hand acquaintance with the social polity and culture of several foreign countries. He has thus equipped himself for a reasoned and comparative estimate of the ways of life in the East and the West. His work covers a wide range of topics—the essentials of Indian civilisation; India's contribution to world culture; position of women; caste. In language lucid and vigorous,

which some may regard as polemical, he has sought to interpret the culture and ideal of India and defend the civilisation of this country against critics who show no proper appreciation of its inner meaning and spirit. But this does not mean that he is an uncritical admirer of everything that is old. If he draws pointed attention to the fundamental features of our glorious heritage, he is not oblivious of the tangled weeds that obstruct our progress towards a fuller and better life. What he aims at is a just and balanced estimate of our culture. The work, though erudite, is free from technical details. The reader, be he a specialist or a layman, a conservative or a reformer, a lover of old ways or an admirer of modern civilisation, will find in it ample food for reflection.

SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The preparation of this book was started about three years ago at Manila where I had been the Head of the Philosophy Department of the Philippine Government University. It was the dismal cultural situation in international life coupled with the unfortunate position of India in the eye of the average foreigner, as a result of the widespread misrepresentation of her civilization carried on by the unscrupulous agents of some powerful nations, which led me to undertake this task. The preparation was interrupted for some time owing to my departure from Manila but was resumed soon after my arrival at Paris where the work was practically completed about a year ago.

Meanwhile, events in Europe and in the Far East have been moving fast as a fake civilization soaks its pretending hands with the blood of the innocent and drags the world to a new Armageddon which may turn out to

be one vast cultural holocaust. Things look extremely ominous indeed, but not without providing some grim lessons for us who are still held under the spell of cant and hypocrisy posing as civilization. The last World War did not convince us, in any effective manner, of our error of judgment and hence, probably, it is going to be repeated soon in such a thorough and impressive manner as will make it appear like a sort of perfect house-cleaning, so that whatever is left of civilization thereafter will not deceive the world any longer. To us war is despicable, barbarous—a relic of our jungle inheritance. But how can we help witnessing its grim exhibition, at some intervals, as long as there are nations who take cultural pride in thickly foresting their portions of the earth's surface with bayonets, guns, cannon, shells, tanks, armoured cars, gas bombs, war planes, zeppelins, dirigibles, dreadnoughts, cruisers, destroyers, submarines, and so on? The terrible forest which they thus make and then live in, naturally sheds its own colour on them and keeps on quickening their old forest nature. If they would only know that this

kind of forestry is not civilization, but just its reverse!

In interpreting the conception of civilization I have tried to develop an organic theory of it—somewhat in the nanner of Oswald Spengler. But an organic theory of civilization may tend to lead one—as it has led Spengler—to pessimism. According to this great German philosopher, a civilization has, like an organism, a natural term of years in which it arises, thrives, matures, decays, and finally passes away. Evidently, he had before his view, as he sought to develop his theory, the histories of the various ancient civilizations that are now dead and the history of what is known as the Western civilization which, as it appears to him, is about to strike its own death-knell. Basing the organic theory on the facts of these dead civilizations as arranged by Spengler, one may see the force of logical induction and prophesy a sad destiny for all the living civilizations of the world. But it seems Spengler has not considered carefully the facts of the two great civilizations—Chinese and Indian—each of which has successfully withstood so far the natural laws of organic life

by beginning its term with the oldest of the dead civilizations and yet continuing to-day with full confidence, fresh hopes, and great aspirations which can arise only from its youthful spirit. Perhaps he has thought that because Indian civilization has failed to be as highly creative at present as it used to be, its youth has passed away and it is now in a state of decay. He does not seem to have realised that if it has ceased to be highly creative now, it is because its youthful energy has to be used in the long struggle which it has been carrying on against the invading cultural forces. Its youth is there, exerting itself in ceaseless acts of resistance. Thus in considering his view we do not find the facts of Indian civilization very apposite. The truth is that a civilization is an organism, but not exactly like one of physical nature. It is not Nature's creation. Natural laws are not inexorably applicable to it. It is the creation of man's higher nature which may not always submit to natural laws. Even if it may submit, the average span of life may not be as definitely fixed as that of the individual. Who can tell how long Indian civilization is

still going to retain its youthful vigour and energy? If it has gone through many alternate periods of expansion and shrinkage, evolution and involution, it has never suffered a pronounced change to show the passing of its youth. It is the creation of the collective spirit of the Indian people. As long as these people maintain the youthful nature of their collective spirit and preserve intact the vital relation with their civilization, there is hardly any ground for pessimism. Indian civilization may continue to maintain its youth for even a far longer future than its long past. Of course, the people of India are not so dogmatic as to assume that their civilization will never come to an end, although they would not like to think of such a painful destiny. Just as they cannot understand the theological absurdity that the soul of a man has its beginning but it has no end, they cannot hold that although their civilization has its beginning it will never have its end. It will have its end, but that end may take myriads of years yet, nay countless ages, to come at last. It depends upon how long the Indian people will succeed in preserving the youthful nature of their collective spirit as

signified by their united power to resist opposing forces, to dream, to hope, to act, and to create, and how long they can maintain the vital relation with their civilization.

In view of this important consideration it has become very necessary, in this age of cultural iconoclasm, that one should know how our Indian civilization stands to-day. If the following pages prove helpful in this direction, I shall consider that my labour has not been in vain.

A few of the earlier chapters were published in some Philippine and Indian magazines. I express my sincere thanks to the editors of those journals for kindly allowing me to use them in this book. I owe a great debt of gratitude to Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri, M.A., Ph.D., Carmichael Professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture, Calcutta University, who carefully went through the whole of the typoscript and helped me with valuable criticisms and suggestions. But above all, I am heavily indebted to Dr. S. P. Mookerjee, M.A., D.Litt., Ex-Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, who evinced a deep interest in the publication of this work and,

in his usual affable manner, yielded to my request to write its Foreword. But for his generous help the book would not have come out at this time.

D. N. R.

P-102, LAKE ROAD, CALCUTTA,
September, 1938.

THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN CIVILIZATION

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CHAPTER I

COMFORTABLE ILLUSION

A new episode of an old bogey has been taking placc in Ethiopia. The fierce god of power has inspired one of its ardent votaries for the periodical celebration at its sacrificial altar. Italy, the great votary of this time, is in her profound sanctimonious spirit to choose Ethiopia as the best sacrifice for her favourite deity. Signor Mussolini has assumed the supreme task of the priest and has already delivered his impressive sermons for the edification of those who seem to express some sort of scepticism in this solemn occasion. The celebration has not been finished yet.

The main topic of Mussolini's sermons is, of course, nothing very strange to us. It is that oft-repeated comfortable slogan of the

excessively powerful—'for the cause of civilization.' He means to tell us that Italy feels it her sacred duty to take charge of "uncivilized Ethiopia" and spread civilization there. This is an old apology which serves as a convenient mask for any sort of rapacious undertaking. The great powers of the present world are quite familiar with it. They had their own psychological occasions to use it in other parts of the world. They too picked up some excuse or other, similar to the excuse of slavery in Ethiopia, and magnified it hundredfold to prove that the "natives" were savage and it was nothing but a humanitarian task on their part to work for the cause of civilization among them. Most of these powers have been still "carrying civilization." Mussolini has sought only to show his profound regard for the same kind of logic as they have also used when he expressed his great sympathy for the unfortunate slaves of Ethiopia and his sublime determination to deliver them by enslaving the entire people of that country. Consequently he has started what his French apologists call "colonial expedition" for the sake of civiliza-

tion. It certainly is a surprise to him that the great powers do not like to take it as such.

As we look back to history and take notice of the numerous bloodcurdling episodes similar to, some probably worse than, what has been taking place in Ethiopia and as we reflect upon that common apology of serving the cause of civilization, we are led to wonder as to what this matter called civilization really is. Many of us begin to feel very much puzzled when we see that in its name what would appear to plainest common sense as an atrocious act or a positive evil may easily pass for something else with ample reasons to justify itself. It is the power-possessed people who are heard to talk frequently about civilization. They are the ones who develop the peculiar sense of the duty to carry civilization to others—by others meaning, of course, those who are weak and can be safely treated as backward people.

A little study of such historical episodes and of the present activities of the big powers in their colonies invariably reveals certain naive assumptions which are uncritically perhaps even unconsciously held as good. One of

them is that *civilization is the exclusive property and product of the powerful*. Where there is power there is supposed to be civilization. Nowhere have we Orientals learnt it more clearly than in the last Russo-Japanese war. The Japanese received their certificate of being a civilized people when they proved by defeating Russia that they were as powerful as any other people. Before that time they were not at all considered as civilized by those who were then very powerful. Now that they are one of the most powerful nations of the world they can freely claim to be one of the five 'most civilized' nations and no nation is heard to deny it.

As a sort of equally naive corollary of this convenient assumption it is also inversely drawn that civilization is not possible where the people lack in power. Italy herself is the best example of it. She is, of course, considered now to be one of the most highly civilized countries of the world inasmuch as her military strength is quite formidable and is well prepared to back up any aggressive campaign. Her ability to serve the cause of civilization is no

longer disputed. But this very Italy was considered a few decades ago, especially in America, to be on a much lower plane of civilization and her people were frankly classified with other Latin people of southern Europe alleged to be distinctly inferior in civilization to the people of the northern and north-eastern Europe. Signor Mussolini, as a great leader, evidently saw this and to avert even a greater humiliation than this for his people he has succeeded marvellously, in course of a few years, to organize and train them in the most modern military science and tactics. Italy also can talk now of inferior and uncivilized people and can rightly engage herself in the blessed occupation of spreading civilization. If other powerful nations are condemning Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, it is not because they question the latter's ability 'to civilize' that unfortunate country—they certainly do not question it at all—but because they fear that their own national interests may be seriously involved. In all such international condemnations it still has the unconscious recognition that where there is power there is civilization.

This necessarily leads to the other important assumption of the big powers. It is this that *civilization has one uniform standard.* The extreme love of power makes it hard for the powerful nations to conceive of any other standard than power itself. Naturally all things that go with power carry with them the marks of civilization. Whatever in other countries, especially of the weaker people, seems to appear in contradistinction to those things may be looked upon with disfavour and declared as due to lack of civilization. It simplifies the whole problem of how to civilize the 'backward' or 'uncivilized' people. There can be only one way to become civilized and that is by faithfully and unreservedly following the ways of the powerful. So it is quite natural for the big powers that wherever they go "to civilize the natives" they need only to teach the latter to adopt their ways and things and to discard all the native characteristics which are different. Even such people of the powerful nations as may form the most ordinary and worthless class in their own countries come to civilize the natives and easily make

themselves useful and important by their work; for to the natives including their best even they may feel quite superior and destined only to be followed. The question of their moral and intellectual fitness "to civilize" is unimportant if not irrelevant. It is not necessary for them to study and understand the native peculiarities, for about these their general opinion has already been formed. It is obvious that this opinion is not a favourable one. They cannot help it. Any recognition of the things of the natives, which are manifestly different from those of their own, would be damaging to the uniform-standard conception of civilization and may serve to undermine their privileged position in colonial relationships.

This comfortable assumption has in a way received the blessing of even such men of the various parts of the world, especially of the West, as are often known to be scholars. Professor Ellsworth Huntington of the Yale University in America has put up, in his memorable study of the "distribution of civilization," an interesting classification of the various countries of the world, determining the comparative

position which each holds in civilization. With the great purpose of constructing "a map of civilization to serve as a standard of reference" he asked, so he says, "over two hundred people in twenty-seven countries to help in preparing a map." In his letter to each of them he gave his definition of civilization. He received replies from one hundred and thirty-seven persons. Of them only six were Asiatics, three Japanese and three Chinese, and the rest were all Occidentals including such personalities as missionaries, colonial officials, and business men. The good professor regretted that no one from India sent any reply. On the basis of the statement of those who gave their opinions upon this subject he has been able to construct a map of civilization.

It is not necessary to present a picture of this map in order to find out which countries have been declared as possessing higher civilization and which lower. Anybody who is acquainted with the general Western psychology can easily guess it. He can be quite sure that excepting Japan no countries

of Asia can have any respectable position in this map. It was very good of the American professor to admit that this definition of civilization was a European definition. And it is not at all hard for us to understand why this professor, at the same time, took this definition as "also a world-wide definition" of civilization. He could never have thought of such an audacious undertaking as preparing a map of civilization which he has prepared unless he felt that his European definition was also a world-wide definition. He found, of course, a number of Westerners with similar mental composition to feel interested in such a plan. As for our part, if we should be interested in any aspect of this plan it is in knowing a little closely those few Asiatics who took part in it and the kind of reply which each of them had sent.

Professor Huntington has not discovered anything new. But his work deserves the full and sincere appreciation of the powerful nations who certainly see, in this sort of scientific study, the happy confirmation of their favourite belief and feel much flattered

and encouraged. His research, however, has shown at least that there is some civilization in Asia, although it is decidedly inferior to the Western civilization. Should there not be a fresh research to prove that the professor's investigation should be considered as unreliable since it appears to have been influenced by his feeling of sympathy for Asia? It would perhaps be even more encouraging if some other Western scholar of similar scientific temperament can show in the same manner that Asia is not at all civilized. The belief of this kind is not hard to find. Here is one from a well-known and highly placed writer, Sir Henry Norman. Thus he says, "Asia—always excepting Japan—never has been civilized and never will be, till a greater change comes than this age is likely to see, otherwise than at the mouth of the cannon and the point of the bayonet." This thrilling quotation is taken from his book, *The Far East*, which has gone through many editions and impressions and has thus served to spread his unctuous belief among his numerous readers. Should there not be

someone in the West now to take up the task of sanctifying this belief with some halo of science?

We of India, perhaps more than any other Orientals, feel very keenly the full implication of the foregoing assumptions. This is because we have our own civilization which, being different in many respects from the type the present power-possessed nations profess to have, is constantly surrounded by threatening forces and is daily confronting attacks from here and there. It cost India many centuries of meditation and worldly experience to build this civilization. We are proud of our ancestors who not only struggled throughout ages to save it but also used their best experience and utmost endeavours to develop and enrich it. We are proud of them who bequeathed this glorious heritage to help us understand the problem of things that are within us and things that are without us and to inspire us to perform our duties towards all.

We have seen it in many cases of the primitive tribes who used to live by slowly developing a little culture system in the midst

of their own peculiar conditions and upon whom some powerful nation or other sought to impose its civilization in total disregard of their natural proclivities and environmental conditions. The tribes slowly degenerated, lost their collective as well as individual vitality, and finally died out. We know also of some cases of primitive people who, it is true, have not physically died out on account of their being compelled by the same type of powerful nations to accept its civilization, but have become mere moral and cultural hypocrites constituting a real danger to one another and a burden to the world. If they do not physically die out, it is probably because of some highly favourable natural conditions which help them to retain their physical virility despite their progressive moral degeneration. There is no need here to make any specific mention of such cases, the world knows well about them.

It is not hard to understand why the primitive people suffer in this manner when compelled to accept some exotic civilization. These people have their own ways of social

life which they evolved as they felt the need of them for the common group welfare. It is quite natural that these ways are peculiarly their own, being evolved out of the peculiar conditions of race, climate, geographical situation, and so on. As these ways of their social life are self-imposed the principles which underlie them have great moral values for the people. They learn by following these ways of their own to acquire a habit of self-discipline which is one of the cardinal principles common to all types of civilization. When these ways become well defined through long experience of the common good they form the most important materials of a distinct culture system which gradually blossoms out into a new civilization. Then the whole humanity can profit from such new addition to the world of civilizations. But if the primitive people are forced to renounce the peculiar ways of their social life in favour of those of some alien civilization, they not only lose their own sense of moral discipline and their self-confidence but also fail to acquire any new moral sense from what is imposed upon them. Any

kind of imposition, especially by an alien people, however civilized, is morally destructive to the natives. Things of an alien civilization can be beneficial to the natives only when these are rightly understood and sincerely desired by them out of their own free will. But such is not at all possible where there is any imposition or compulsion. Things imposed upon them can only tend to throw them into a state of moral confusion. And when the people live without any definite moral consciousness they find nothing strong enough to bind them together. Under such a state of moral confusion and social disintegration the primitive people are themselves unable to face the battle of life. Consequently they die out or if they live they live only as slaves of others.

Now, if the imposition of an exotic civilization is so disastrous to the primitive people, how much more would it be to those who have already their own distinct and well-developed civilization? The ways of the latter are very much more clearly defined than those of the former and the principles underlying them are

more deeply rooted in their lives. Some of these ways may have thoroughly entered into every phase of their social being. If, in spite of all these facts, an alien civilization is imposed upon such people, it works like a sharp instrument severing them from their vital connections. Can there be any greater misfortune to them than this ?

Thus, a little reflection upon the present experience and the past history of human relationships may reveal to us that any kind of absolutism or overlordship in the field of civilization is due to an intoxication of power which seeks, for its own gratification, to impose itself upon others under lofty pretensions causing destruction wherever it goes. We in India cannot conscientiously accept any absolutistic creed in civilization. Of course, there are many beautiful things which all civilizations are found to have in common, just as there are many important characteristics which can be found in all racial groups of mankind. But those common things do not make any uniform standard of civilization, just as the common human characteristics do

not make all peoples alike. There are many interesting and important differences in the different civilizations of the world. These arise, as we have already seen, on account of racial, climatic, and geographical differences. There is another good reason against assuming a uniform standard. It is true that all civilizations agree in possessing certain essential things in common, but not all civilizations give equal emphasis upon them. Each civilization maintains its distinctive nature by emphasising some of them much more than other civilizations. This emphasis comes from the nature of the ideal upheld by the people. Indeed a civilization is the result of the work which the people carry on to realise their group ideal. The importance of this ideal may be understood from the fact that it is often regarded as the soul of the people. When we consider the fact that the ideal of a people reflects its peculiar mentality, its inclinations and aspirations the designation appears to be very appropriate. It also explains why different peoples hold different ideals for them. And as long as different

peoples hold different ideals it is absurd to think of a uniform standard of civilization.

The evident futility of setting up such a standard of measurement shows how much value we can put upon the judgment of those who make a comparative study of the different civilizations of the world by using their own standard with which others may not agree.

Is there no way then to make a comparative study of civilizations possible ? There is, if we can agree in our comparative study of ideals involved in them. Suppose the ideal of one civilization is power, that of another is peace, and that of a third one is inward refinement or self-realisation. Which of them is higher and which is lower ? If we can agree in this point, we may say that the civilization which represents the higher ideal is higher than the one which represents a lower ideal. But men are generally unwilling to agree in this point, especially because it involves their own social position. In the above instance we have only made a supposition while in an actual fact the ideal of each civilization may be more complex than what we have mention-

ed. In that case our comparative study is even more difficult, for the votaries of each ideal would find their defence shelter in its complexity and would not agree. This difficulty should serve as a good warning for those who try to compare one civilization with another and adjust their respective position.

CHAPTER II

MEANING OF CIVILIZATION

In vain one goes to consult a dictionary, standard or otherwise, for a clear conception of the word civilization. What is given in it to clarify the meaning appears to be as hard to understand as the word itself. Yet it is the most important and commonly used word in all our present problem of international relationships. Indeed it has given us an extremely interesting subject in our age. The platform and the pulpit are too often resounded with vigorous talks on it. The market is simply glutted with books and periodicals concerning this question. Philosophers, historians, anthropologists, sociologists, politicians, even missionaries and soldiers have much to say and write on it. They talk and write about civilization and barbarism, about the civilized, the less civilized, and the savage. Many of them do it with much confidence and enthusiasm as if they are convinced that others accept what they assume civilization to be.

We may mention, as a typical example, Mr. Clive Bell who has written an interesting book on civilization. In his attempt to give a general meaning of the word he selects what he regards as three outstanding places of history,—Athens of Pericles, renascent Italy of Lorenzo, and France of Louis Quinz or rather Voltaire. It seems that the selection is made on the basis of his belief that these places had developed the highest types of civilization. The general meaning of civilization consists, therefore, in whatever peculiar characteristics these three types may possess in common. We do not know if all the Western nations find the meaning of civilization thus formulated acceptable to them. But we can assure Mr. Bell that there are also great peoples outside of the West who have their own civilizations, each with a long and glorious history, and who naturally have something to say on the subject. They too have their own notions of civilization of which they are no less confident than Mr. Bell is of his. Probably they can justify their notions as clearly and successfully, if not more, as any apologist of the West.

Unfortunately, this fact has received very scant consideration from most of the Western writers. In their discussion on civilization they usually fail to pay due regard to the important peculiarities of the non-Western civilizations and seek only to capitalise the peculiarities of their own. Mr. Bell goes even so far as to rule out from among the characteristics of civilization such qualities as justice, humanitarianism, respect for human life, etc., which are really fundamental to all civilizations. He chooses to regard them as irrelevant, because they are found, perhaps in a much greater degree, among the less civilized and uncivilized peoples. In his treatment of the subject he is guided mainly by his personal feeling for certain people whom he likes to regard as the most civilized, leaving all others in the category of the less civilized or uncivilized. He probably believes that his reasons for such treatment are also other peoples' reasons and if there are some people holding different views he does not mind disregarding them altogether, especially when they represent any of the non-Western civilizations.

His book only betrays his excessive loyalty to a special set of things and ideas, making it difficult, if not impossible, for us to pay any regard to his definition of civilization.

The simple assumption—that only the West counts in matters of civilization—upon which Mr. Bell has evidently based his main thesis, seems to have taken a deep root in the Western countries. Thanks to the forceful and self-flattering works of a powerful group of Western writers headed by such of them as Gobineau, Grant, Stoddard, Chamberlain, McDougall, Huntington, Osborn, Wiggam, and East this assumption has taken a sort of scientific colour causing a great confusion in the minds of those people who have not seen through the modern games of scientific research carried on by race phobists to gratify their racial and cultural egotism. The peculiar inspiration which has set these writers busy comes, however, from the great mass of literature produced by early Western writers, especially the church people who dominated the mind of the West for over fifteen hundred years and are still a most powerful factor in

shaping the attitude of the West towards the non-Western peoples and their civilizations. Buckle has shown us, in his *History of Civilization in England*, how "Christian priests obscured the annals of every European people they converted," by framing fantastic and often insulting stories about their pre-Christian history. What they did with regard to the non-Christian people of Europe, who were in many ways similar to them, can enable us to imagine what they have done and have been doing with regard to the non-European people having so few similarities and so many differences with them. They have always sought to misrepresent everything they could not understand and they would not try to understand anything which differed from their own. Many of the modern Western writers may have disentangled themselves from that mental narrowness of the priests, but inasmuch as they have to depend much upon the literary stuff produced by such priests to rewrite history, they can hardly avoid treating the non-European peoples and their civilizations in about the same manner. Oswald

Spengler has deplored this fact in his scholarly production, *The Decline of the West*. With a broad philosophical outlook he draws the attention of the Western world to what he calls the "Ptolemaic system of history" according to which the great cultures of the world "are made to follow orbits round us as the assumed centre of all world happenings." Against this prevailing unjust system he suggests a "Copernican system of history" which would allow "no sort of privileged position to the classical or Western culture as against the cultures of India, Babylon, China, Egypt, the Arabs, Mexico - separate worlds of dynamic being which in point of mass count for just as much in the general picture of history as the classical, while frequently surpassing it in point of spiritual greatness and soaring power."

But, while Spengler gives the moral justification of the need of a Copernican system to be followed in all treatment of the cultures and civilizations of the world, the race phobists and the religious fanatics are busy multiplying their megalomaniac productions

preventing all possibilities of a cultural *rapproachement*.

Fortunately, the post-War pessimism of the West seems to show a rising tendency, in some corner or other, to check the tide of over-swollen egotism as it looks with a sceptical eye at the vaunted worth of the Western civilization and seeks to understand the values of other civilizations of the world. This tendency, weak as it is when compared with that egotistic complex of the West, raises the hope of gradually clearing the beclouded atmosphere of prejudice and making it possible for all existing civilizations to receive the same kind of treatment in the common light of human understanding. There are a few broad-minded Western thinkers who are now trying to undo the injustice of ages done to the non-Western peoples and their civilizations. Having realised the folly and futility of following the usual Ptolemaic system in the realm of civilization they are now able somewhat to study and understand each civilization from the standpoint of those who belong to it, and are doing their best to

present it before the West in the same light. This is certainly encouraging. It may help the world to hear more about civilizations than about *the civilization* which has hitherto been made to stand exclusively for the Western civilization.

In fact the world has rather too much of *the civilization*. Probably that is why it has not been able to form a standard definition of the word. For such a definition can be formed not from the different phases of one civilization nor from the peculiarities of the different civilizations; it can be formed, if it must be formed, of the common and essential characteristics of all civilizations.

But before we proceed to discuss the question of such characteristics we must stop to remember that the word civilization has two distinct senses. It should be taken both as a process and as a product. These two senses are like two aspects of it—one subjective and the other objective—both of which are equally important in our understanding of civilization.

As a process, it implies the act of making

one civil or social. It is that act of man which serves to socialize him in all his relationships. Civilization in this respect is synonymous with socialization. It refers primarily to the manner of living. It makes man feel his oneness with others. The extent of others may be limited to a small number of individuals when civilization has not advanced much, but it becomes larger and larger as civilization advances. Any emphasis upon egotism, individual or national, is a great hindrance to civilization inasmuch as it seeks to frustrate man's feeling of oneness with others. The question as to why man should feel in that wise does not arise in those who believe that there is something inherently good in human nature which brings increasing happiness to them as it is cultivated by their act of fellowship. Such belief makes the act quite spontaneous and leads to the formation of society upon a highly moral basis. Civilization in that society advances in a beautiful manner as the vision of fellowship expands farther and farther until finally it comprehends all that exists.

But the above question may become insistent in the case of those who believe in the inherent selfishness of human nature, inasmuch as their belief dismisses the possibility of a spontaneous urge for fellowship. The answer to such question is evidently to be based upon some intellectual rather than moral ground. Thomas Hobbes and many other Western thinkers have given the answer. Fellowship, according to them, is a matter of contract necessary to guarantee more security and ensure greater happiness than one can have by living wholly by oneself. It is an intellectual arrangement of individuals to consider how best they can exercise their freedom and avoid all possible dangers involved in that exercise. It allows the question of rights to assume supreme importance in life, while that of duties takes only a secondary place being more or less determined upon the consideration of the former. The society born of such an arrangement is naturally far more political than moral in its aim and outlook. Civilization in that form of society confines itself mostly in the outward

show of behaviour without a corresponding inward refinement of life. It makes man develop a dual personality—one formal and the other natural. In all his social relationships he learns to use his formal self to hide the natural one and in such act he exercises his intellect far more than anything else of his natural self. Civilization may thus make him smart, clever, and pretentious, but not truly refined. It makes him civil, but not good.

In India civilization, as a process, has never had the occasion to assume that political or formal sense. There the people have never learnt to think that man is naturally selfish. On the contrary, they have the firm belief that man in his real self partakes of the nature of God and is, therefore, pure and good. If he develops selfish inclinations, it is due to his ignorance. The veil of ignorance vanishes before his mind's eye as he learns to feel his oneness with others believing that the same divinity dwells in all. With that belief he earnestly seeks to develop a real urge for fellow-feeling. It is said,

Yastu sarvani bhutani atmanyevanupashyati,
Sarbabhuteshu chatmanam tato na vijugupsate.

"He who sees all beings in self and self in all beings does not for that reason despise anybody." Even illiterate Hindus learn about this truth from tradition. Naturally they form society from an inward urge to feel for one another and not upon any contractual basis. It is the question of duties which constitutes their supreme interest in society and not that of rights; for, as they know, the question of rights loses its importance where the people earnestly keep their minds occupied with the thought of their own duties. This is why their social life has been dominated very much by moral consciousness rather than political. Their absorbing thought has been: 'How can we make ourselves more and more good to others and less and less dangerous?' Civilization in their society has always meant progressive socialization of their lives by developing all the finer feelings which help them to realize their own selves in others and others in their own selves. It refers primarily to the inward refinement which reflects itself upon their desires and inclinations, manners and customs, and all other overt actions bearing upon their social attitudes.

From our discussion of civilization as a process we may now turn to its other sense which makes it a product. The modern Western writers, with only a few exceptions, place almost the whole emphasis upon this sense. They seem to make civilization appear only as a sort of possession and choose to judge a people chiefly from what it has, as if its possession is the sole determinant of what it is. If mere possession of the things of civilization would make one civilized, then a complete solution of all social and cultural problems could have been easily possible through an adequate supply of such things to all the fearful savages that still pester our world. Such conception would make a rich or a powerful man, who can have plenty of them by purchasing or plundering, more civilized than one like the Buddha or Socrates or Christ. We should not fail to remember that civilization, as a process, helps people to realise the proper value of civilization as a product. If the latter goes without the former it may lose its real meaning and, through abuse, may turn out to be an instrument of

savagery. It is unfortunate if the world learns to take civilization only as a product.

But there can be no denying the fact that civilization in this latter sense is equally important. As the process of civilization begins among certain people it invariably calls for the need of many things which serve as a constant incentive to their social feelings and with which they find their social lives more and more enjoyable. These things become available through their inventive and acquisitive powers and constitute the objective phase of their civilization. With this phase the act of civilization progresses in an extensive manner. Without it no such act can be actually carried on.

This objective phase is not exactly the same in all civilizations. It cannot be so, because its conditions are not the same everywhere. Nature by its inexorable law does not permit the same conditions to prevail everywhere, for nature is the art of God and as art it must emphasise variety. The natural conditions being different in different geographical areas the people of a certain country

form their own peculiar ways of life by reacting to its conditions amidst which they live. These peculiar ways of the people represent the peculiarities of their civilization. All civilizations of the world have their peculiarities the proper meaning of which can be understood only when studied with reference to the peculiar conditions in the midst of which they arise.

But the peculiarities of each civilization are not the whole of it. If we study the different civilizations of the world, living as well as dead, we can certainly find some characteristics which are common and essential to all of them. Is there any civilization without some form of agriculture, industry, language, literature, art, science, morality, philosophy, and religion ? If there be any we are not aware of it. The fact is, so far as it is known to us, these things are the most indispensable factors of a civilization. Take away any one of them and the civilization is seriously crippled; for civilization is like an organism with these things representing as its limbs. Each of them is vitally connected with the

others and all grow upon their mutual adjustment and co-operation. No civilization is worthy of the name unless its different factors are related to one another in the same manner as the limbs of an organism.

These factors are taken here only in the general objective sense of civilization. Each of them may also have its further branches or developments, more or less, in every great civilization. Agriculture, for instance, has its various branches like farming, gardening, forestry, irrigation, etc., which show the rich scope of this one important factor. Similarly, the other factors may also have their various special branches adding to the splendour of the civilization to which they belong. The wonderful developments of industry in a certain civilization of our age show the high degree of interest which the people of that civilization take in that particular factor. But none of these branches should be allowed, on account of its dazzling form, to eclipse the position of any of the essential factors.

A civilization may also have many other things very beautiful and, perhaps, important

to the people who possess it. In some cases they may develop so much love for such things that they do not like to think of civilization without them. If they only realise that their civilization alone cannot set the standard, they would be able to see that those additional things, with all their beauty and importance for them, are but brilliant details or decorations which give that particular civilization its distintive character. But those things should not take the place of the essentials. This is an important point which needs special emphasis for the Western people many of whom fail to recognize this distinction. It is for them that the statement of Mr. Hendrik William Van Loon, a recent writer on civilization, should serve as a good reminder. "It is not," says he, "an accumulation of material things. It is not wealth. It is not military glory or the possession of vast colonial domains. It has little to do with mere book-learning and one can be a tremendous scientist and remain as uncivilized as a baboon. Rapid means of transportation, railroads, viaducts, and docks and aeroplane hangars have as little to do with

civilized existence as a favourable trade balance in pig-iron or telegraph poles." These things may have their peculiar value and importance among the people of a certain civilization, but they should know at the same time that the people of a different civilization may not estimate them in the same manner. On the other hand, the latter type of people may have in their civilization many peculiar things which are very high and noble in their own estimation but may not even be recognized by the former as of any importance at all. Such things have only relative values and do not form any real factor of civilization.

The essential character of each of the nine factors of civilization which we have enumerated reminds us of a curious thing. It has become almost an accepted fashion among many contemporary thinkers to talk confidently of such a thing as "agricultural civilization" or "industrial civilization" and to assign a comparative value to each. We do not know if they agree with us in recognizing the nine essential factors of civilization which include both agriculture and industry. If they do not,

we can only say that their conception of civilization is derived from some other planet than the one in which we live. For there is no civilization—and perhaps there never was any—in this world without those nine factors being present in some form or other. Agriculture and industry are certainly the most phenomenal of them. It is unbelievable that there can be any disagreement as to these essential factors. Now, if they agree, we do not know how they can talk of such a thing as " agricultural civilization " or " industrial civilization." Those essential factors of civilization are, as we have already stated, like the limbs of an organism. Can an organism be qualified by one of its limbs ? Can we say such a thing as " nosed man " or " eyed man " or " legged man " ? We certainly cannot, for nose, eyes, and legs are some of the constituent parts of human organism and cannot be considered apart to qualify it. Similarly, as agriculture and industry are the essential parts of a civilization we do not understand how these can be used to qualify it. The absurdity of such a conception is too obvious to need any explanation.

But let us revert to something more important than this. Our conception of the organic nature of civilization reveals to us another significant fact which we cannot afford to overlook. Like the limbs of an organism those essential factors are supposed to have a common source which enables them to fit well together and co-operate, making the civilization they thus constitute a really living and growing thing. A truly living and growing civilization cannot be formed out of factors taken from sources which are by nature incompatible with one another. If some people try to form a new civilization by borrowing the various essential factors from different civilizations and then setting them together, they may have something new indeed but we are not sure if that thing would be a civilization. It would probably deserve the name of civilization if those factors from alien sources could be well adjusted so as to make them co-operate in a natural manner and interpenetrate to form themselves into one living whole. As long as nature has its inexorable law of designing a rich variety as shown in the different racial

types with their different outlooks and ideals of life, such a condition may never be satisfactorily fulfilled. If one of the factors is taken from a civilization with an ideal incompatible with the ideal of another civilization from which certain other factor is taken, the two factors will invariably fail to adjust themselves and to co-operate.

It is true, modern science has shown a new marvel called grafting. But it has also told us that such grafting is possible only in cases of closely allied things. Peaches may be grafted on a plum tree, because these two are very closely related by nature. But one may try in vain to graft pears on a jack tree. In a like manner some particular factor of one civilization may be implanted on another civilization with a good result provided the two hold allied ideals. It would be possible then for the latter civilization to adjust the new factor and assimilate it into its own system. But no such result could be possible when the two civilizations hold opposite ideals. Each essential factor of a civilization maintains itself through its vital connection with the ideal and

if that factor is introduced into another civilization with a conflicting ideal, it fails to establish such connection. It is introduced only to disturb and even thwart the peaceful and harmonious growth of the civilization which is obliged to spend most of its vital energy in resisting the foreign intruder.

A civilization, however, is by nature not insociable to its other kinds. As an organic whole it seeks always to preserve itself by gathering nourishment from wherever it can. Why should it ever refuse to accept any stuff from outside if it would really nourish its system and give it more health and growth? But it takes whatever it can assimilate and refuses whatever it cannot. If there is anything from outside which it is unwilling to accept, it is because of its difficulty to assimilate it. That thing may be very fine and substantial to some system and yet it may be quite different, even poisonous, to another. This is why there is manifest cruelty, if not savagery, in all forceful attempt at introducing the elements of one civilization into another.

This is an important point having its special bearing upon the problem of civilization in India. The people of this ancient country have their civilization built essentially, unlike most other civilizations, out of indigenous materials. The origin of all the important factors of their civilization was in India. None of them was taken from another civilization of non-Indian origin and grafted upon their own. In an atmosphere undisturbed by any intrusive elements from outside the various essential factors were able to develop themselves in an orderly and harmonious manner. If some elements of a foreign civilization were found to fit in well with any of these factors, there never was any objection to admit them into the civilization of the land. For, the people of India with their highly artistic sense could see that such elements had some decorative value for their civilization. They knew that by accepting them they would not cause any disturbance in the original positions and internal relations of the factors of their civilization. Being born of and nourished by a common source each of them has always had the natural urge to co-

operate and the tendency to grow along with the others. No intrusive foreign elements could long stand the resistance of the Indian civilization with its closely related factors co-operating in all earnestness. Being organic in the full sense of the term it would not allow any of its essential factors to be submerged and devitalized by an exotic element with all its advertised fascination. The highest strength of the Indian civilization lies in the fine organic relationships of its different factors. It is this strength which has made it the sole survivor of the ancient civilizations of the world. Periodical invasions of the most terrible kind have been the sad lot of India since the time of Semiramis of Nineveh. Amidst all these invasions and the consequent vicissitudes her civilization maintained its ground and continued its life with its ancient glory and self-confidence. But the misfortunes with which she has been struggling for about two centuries have intrenched themselves so deep in the land that these can now seek to strike from every possible direction at the vital relations of the different factors of her civilization so that the combined resistance of these

factors would not be of much avail. The crisis thus created has all the appearances of an overwhelming power. While the forces of disintegration are busy underneath, things and ideas of alien sources are pouring in over the surface and are trying to fill the atmosphere of Indian life with their glamorous pretensions.

But the resistance has also been going on with alternate hopes and despairs, at present perhaps with more hopes than despairs. Not a few of the Indians who have long been caught in under the spell of the gorgeous advertisements of the alien stuff are beginning to show increasing signs of disillusionment. Every cruel stroke of alien forces is now indirectly bringing out the vast mass of India's latent energy with its native fragrance and scintillating hopes for this great ancient civilization to reassert its former glory.

Nevertheless, the evil is still there busy all the time gathering fresh momentum and seeking more vulnerable points where it can thrust its cruel attack with renewed hope to bring about the collapse of this civilization. India, at this juncture, must watch every imported

movement, whether introduced by her friends or others. She cannot afford to forget that her sincere friendship, profound sympathy, and generous hospitality have all been misunderstood and abused to her great humiliation and bitter misfortune. If these virtues which are undoubtedly well becoming her civilization are still indiscriminately exercised in her relation with outsiders, she may thereby further worsen her position and weaken her power of resistance. She should remember that there are other civilizations which may not equally emphasise such virtues, and even if they do, in some sense or other, not all people are like the Indians so sincerely eager to live up to the higher professions of their civilization. In her dealings with them she should try first to study their ways of life and understand their psychology. When she will find that civilization does not mean exactly the same thing to them as it does to her she may realise the wisdom of using a little her sense of discrimination in the wider application of the higher virtues of her civilization.

CHAPTER III

IS IT PROGRESS?

It was the posthumous work of Condorcet, I believe, which gave the idea of progress its first great impetus in Europe. This young French scholar of the revolutionary fame wrote, in his *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progres de l'espirit humain*, about "the continuous progress of the human race to an ultimate perfection." He gave in it a fine picture of optimism well designed to uphold people extremely depressed by circumstances.

The time was quite psychological. His book came out when the bracing sunshine of freedom had already broken through the dense gloom of medieval tyranny and had prepared the atmosphere of the nineteenth century Europe to be congenial for it. The redeemed mind of Europe, with the dread of the creedal and feudal oppression still lingering in it, developed a sort of suspicion against things

reminiscent of the past—the past as was especially represented by the Dark Ages—while at the same time it sought, as a relief, new things to substitute the old.

What the people of Europe really wanted was some change and the relief which they found when they had it led them to give it the inspiring name of progress. All new activities, movements, inventions, productions, acquisitions—indeed, anything that made a change was regarded as a sign of progress. To them change became synonymous with progress. And they saw no reason why it should not be. Condorcet's conception of human progress being continuous gave a rational interpretation of their new spirit as characterised by their revolt against the past and supplied a strong argument to justify their love for change. Besides, progress literally means, as we all know, " going forward " as distinguished from retrogression or " going backward." The latter would mean living in the past which to them was the most dreadful thing and as such most unwelcome. The only thing they could choose was a change from the

past—a change which, no matter what its nature might be, would certainly be better to them and would enable them to move forward. Would not, therefore, change and progress mean the same ?

This conception of progress being nurtured by the zeal of the Renaissance and the logic of the Enlightenment began to grow in popularity throughout the entire West. On the other hand, its popularity happened to synchronise with an unprecedented spirit of activity which yielded spectacular results, especially along scientific and utilitarian lines catering in increasingly numerous ways for the physical needs and comforts of the Western people. To them there appeared to be some causal connection between such splendid results and their conception of progress. So the latter came to be almost a passion with them. Every new phenomenon had something agreeably sensational in it, for to them its appearance was a further step of progress.

Highly obsessed with this conception the Western people naturally could not appreciate

the life of those other people who were not similarly inclined to kick against their past. When they found that the people of such ancient countries like India would not accept their conception of progress and work for it, they had nothing but condemnation and contempt for them. Instead of trying to understand the viewpoint of such people, they sought, in their zeal of over-confidence, to pass various unkind judgments upon them and their civilization. They started to call India unprogressive, backward, conservative, semi-civilized, even uncivilized—a country which had been a few centuries ago the greatest source of their inspiration for civilization. They told the world with a firm conviction that the country which held such a reluctant attitude toward the boon of what they called progress could not be otherwise. While India with her vast experience and hoary wisdom could take with equanimity those unwarranted qualifications for herself as mere effusions of the impetuous West, the world was not equally prepared to feel in the same manner. Long repetition of the homilies on

progress turned the world inclination to it and then the slanderous stuff against unwilling India took the appearance of truth. The whole nineteenth century had been a picture of the West thoroughly inebriating itself, as it were, with the wine of its conception of progress and seeking to kick at and vilify those countries which dared to differ and stand by their own conception of civilization and progress. India with her own way of seeing things naturally had to be the worst victim.

Long tutored in this conception of progress, the world saw only stubbornness in India's attitude and found justification for her sufferings. Some Western people took this opportunity and went so far as to interpret her attitude by declaring that owing to lack of experience in civilization she was incapable of assimilating the value of progress. If India tried sometimes to explain her standpoint, she could hardly make herself audible enough, thanks to the organized noise of Western progress and power. Her past glories and achievements slowly lost their meaning to the world and a large number of Western thinkers

felt no hesitation in classifying her as a semi-civilized country. Although it was a case comparable to some prattling babies over-conscious of their little magnified selves judging one of long and profound experience as ignorant, the uncomplimentary verdict against India gradually passed as something not undeserving from man to man and from country to country until the whole world heard of it. With her unfortunate political status she could not vindicate her just right in the world of civilization. The right resigned itself to might, and the world took the Western estimate of cultural India with silent approbation. She continued to be described in humiliating terms.

At last the Great War came in 1914 to shake the old faith in progress. While the Western merchants, militarists and politicians have been still swaggering in the name of progress, there are others—and their number is legion—who have developed a thoroughly sceptical attitude. Among them there are great thinkers who are now seeking light in other parts of the world, especially in countries of long history and civilization, to find

some remedy for the awful problem which the hasty West has created for itself as well as for the rest of the world. Amidst cries of the impending crisis in what has hitherto been proclaimed as the most progressive civilization of the world, one may notice also an increasing eagerness to make a fresh appraisal of progress. For, the question is inescapable even to the West that if its civilization is most progressive, how is it that it seems now to be heading to a state of collapse ? If progress leads to such a result, is it at all worth-while ? Perhaps they have been rather too much enamoured of the dazzling appearances of what they love to call progress. Might it not be good if they stopped a while to think why there are people who, unlike them, are not so inclined to accept their conception of progress, and studied things a little deeply for the proper evaluation of their conception ? It might give them a chance to understand their conditions better and indirectly help the world to save itself from many a needless problem.

It seems the atmosphere is now comparatively free from befogging sentimentalism on

the question of progress. If that is true, one may study the question now without being rebuffed or one's viewpoint being totally laughed out. Hard facts of the world are now turning the over-confident mind from its old proud *naivete* and making it go slow in its observation of things.

As one stops to think of the question of progress one may easily perceive its rich implications. A few years ago I made a passing statement on it, which though very brief would suggest how we should like to look at the question. Thus I wrote in my *Philippines and India*, "Change is not progress. . . . Progress means continuation as well as direction ; one refers to the source and the other to the ideal. The source is the soul of the people and the ideal is the soul realising itself. The direction is determined by the ideal and progress is movement toward realising the ideal."

That change is not necessarily progress is easy to understand, for it may be as much for the worse as it is for the better. In the physical side of human experience change seems to be more often than not a disturbing

phenomenon. Love for change usually originates from lack of mental poise. Necessity for change arises when the existing conditions become unadjustable to ourselves. But such necessity is real when there is some stability in our lives. There can be no question of making conditions adjustable to a life which has no stability. Where life consists of ever-shifting impulses and desires, with what can the external conditions be adjusted ? Change there is not necessary but unavoidable. It, however, can make for progress only when it assures more and more stability in the life of the individual as well as of society. But if each change is desired only to be followed by a fresh one which again is discarded soon for some other and so on, it has no sense of progress in it. It implies no rational choice but a perpetual discontent, the cause of which is not outside but inside.

The possibility of progress in a civilization presupposes a condition of its having attained some stabilized, or what in this case we may call organized, form. Unless this condition is fulfilled, the question of progress is too premature.

When a person says that the Western civilization has attained a high degree of progress, he already assumes that it is an organized whole. Since progress as a social phenomenon has long been associated with the Western people, who talk too often with a disgusting air of superiority that their civilization alone is characterised by it and is, therefore, higher than any other civilization, we feel persuaded to study the statement a little more minutely to ascertain how much of Western boasting is consistent with and warranted by that civilization.

What, then, is necessary to know first is whether or not the Western civilization is an organized whole. All civilizations have in common certain important elements which form their essential factors. A civilization is an organized whole when these essential factors in it are well adjusted or brought within intimate relationships like the limbs of an organism. Such adjustment is natural in the case of factors having common origin. But it requires outside effort to attain real adjustment if these factors come from different

sources. Sometimes even with much effort such adjustment may not be feasible. Now, it is a well-known fact that the essential factors of civilization do not have a common origin in the case of the Western civilization. We do not know which of the factors the West can call indigenous. This is why Dr. John Dewey, the most distinguished living philosopher of America, says, "Ever since the time of the Greeks, European culture has been a borrowed one. The bases and chief values of life have been alien, not indigenous." It was not even the same alien source from which the essential factors were borrowed. It borrowed, for instance, most of the principles of its art and philosophy from the Greeks and those of ethics and religion from the Hebrews. The question is, can the realism of Greek art be adjusted to the ethical idealism of Christ or the rational philosophy of the Greeks to the religious dogmas of the Hebrews? Greek art is certainly wonderful when looked at from the standpoint of the Greek ideal of civilization. But it is quite repellent to the fine ethical principles of Christ. Similarly,

there is obvious opposition between rational philosophy and dogmatic religion. How can those mutually conflicting factors in the Western civilization be adjusted? Probably it is this difficulty which has led the Western people to adopt a sort of polymorphic living, dividing life into compartments each with its own peculiar outlook. That is why there has been the need of separating art from morality, morality from science, science from religion, religion from politics, and so on, each being taken for its own sake.

Such facts naturally persuade one to the conclusion that the Western civilization is not an organized whole, that it has not yet attained any real internal synthesis. It, of course, has all the elements of civilization. These elements are, as we have already stated, taken from various alien sources and held together by artificial means to take the name of a civilization. But the first step of the progress of a civilization is its internal organization. Otherwise, with its incoherent elements each demanding special loyalty, it tends only to create confusion in the common soul of the people.

.Besides, progress means continuation and a definite goal or ideal. Continuation has its reference to a source or starting point. What is the source of the Western civilization ? We have seen that it is not one but many, such as, the Greeks, the Romans, the Hebrews, the Arabs, and so forth including, of course, the Western people themselves. If it were possible to bring about a real adjustment among the essential elements of alien sources, then the single whole made out of them could have been permeated and assimilated by the soul of the West, and then we could say that the Western civilization had a common source and that this source was the soul of the people. Now, if the source of an organized civilization is to be the soul of the people possessing it, it is there only in its potential form which becomes real as it is expressed in the ideal. It is thus the same soul which is in the source as well as in the goal of the civilization. The Western civilization having so many alien sources cannot supply one single ideal to direct its movement and determine the measure of its progress. On the other hand, different

ideals show themselves up and cause thereby the people to live sometimes in one way, sometimes in another way which in principle may be entirely incompatible with the former. Amidst an atmosphere of varying ideals they live without the lasting inspiration of any of them, while they may learn to talk on or profess all. They may profess living according to any lofty ideal without actually showing it in practice and yet they may not feel a bit perturbed by that double dealing of life. In reality it means a life without an ideal, for a life with many ideals is a life without any. When some people talk about progress without having a definite ideal in mind, we are afraid, they do not know what it means.

It is true the Western people have cultivated some of the factors of civilization in a manner unrivalled by any other people. Through their perseverance and ceaseless efforts there have been most marvellous developments in science and industry supplying the world with means of comfort, of which it could not even dream before. The world certainly recognizes

their wonderful abilities and successes along these lines. But such developments of a few factors of their civilization do not bring about its progress. Even if the Western civilization had attained some sort of organic form, it could not have made progress with only a few of its factors being developed. Take, for instance, the body of a man. Suppose his hands and legs are well exercised resulting in their full development. Can we say that he has grown in body unless the other limbs are simultaneously and proportionately developed along with the hands and legs ? No, he has not. If he has grown in anything, it is only in ugliness and perhaps to a state in which he finds it hard to hold himself. When some Western thinkers say that their civilization has become too top-heavy, it means that there has been undue development in some parts of it at the cost of some other parts making its stand more and more difficult.

While science and industry have been developed in the Western civilization to a very high degree of perfection, its ethical and spiritual aspects have remained much neglected.

Indeed, one can see that these latter two aspects have not gone yet much beyond their formal stage, these are still on the surface. What Mr. Wallace said about the nineteenth century West is even truer at present. "It will be held," said he in his *The Wonderful Century*, "by the historian of future that we of the nineteenth century were morally and socially unfit to possess for good or for evil what the rapid advance in scientific discoveries had given us. What a horrible mockery is all this, when viewed in the light of either Christianity or advancing civilization." Professor Ladd says similarly in his *Moral and Religious Crisis*, "In business, in politics, in the family and the church, in internal and international relations, the reigning spirit of *covetousness* is at war with the true spirit of morality and religion. . . . The criminal spirit of insolence has become dominant in the whole of Christendom." The last War has certainly shown, as Mr. Van Loon admits, that "the majority of our contemporaries are still pre-eminently people of the late stone age." This sounds strange about the people who

have shown wonderful intellectual powers. Nevertheless, it is not far from truth. The fact is that the spirit of morality and religion cannot thrive under conditions of maladjustment. But the other things, which have no vital connection with them in the Western civilization, would not wait. They would rather draw all the available energy for their individual growth and for making themselves so big and prominent as to pass for the whole Western civilization itself. It is certainly a great triumph for science and industry, but alas, it is not at all a good sign for a civilization to be represented only by them. Over-emphasis of some particular aspects of life to the neglect of others is an atavistic move from civilization.

The Western civilization, with its original incoherence, cannot serve to bring about a real harmony in the internal life of the individual. It only stimulates his habit of restlessness and stirs his primitive war spirit under the modern polished name of competition. It keeps him always busy without his knowing why. It makes him always go on without his knowing where. It gives him no chance to

stop and ask questions to himself. It tends only to mechanize his life. In short, it is a civilization which does not civilize.

But as a result of its constant internal conflict it undergoes frequent changes. It does so because it has to, because there is no help. And what cannot be cured must somehow be endured. The changes are endured under the consoling name of progress.

One can certainly see that there have been very frequent social, political, religious, and other changes in the West. But one may have pretty good reasons to doubt if these have brought about any good change in the nature of the Western people in general. The old prejudices and suspicions of the tribal kind are still there, although perhaps in some sharper and subtler forms. The spirit of competition and exploitation shows no sign of decay. The form of government has indeed undergone many changes from the terrible feudal system and absolute monarchy in which the ruler pompously identified himself with the state to so-called democracy. But the man seems to be the same through all

such changes. His democratic government in his homeland came not as a choice, but as a necessity when he found some outside people to be exploited by means of concerted action. His recognition of equal rights and privileges for his own people has been necessary for him in order that he may go abroad and deprive others of such things. Perhaps it would not be an exaggeration to say that the nation which is said to be most democratic at home is most undemocratic and cruel in its colonial relationships. Similarly, the religious changes, from the infallibility and absolute authority of the Catholic Pope to hundreds of Protestant denominational churches, have not caused the Western people to shake off their old creed-mongering spirit for real spiritual cultivation. It is not strange, from what we have seen, if one sees the same old tribal nature still flourishing in the man of the West in all his social, political, religious, and other outlooks of life. It has assumed only a little more collective form under polished names.

All changes have taken place not through a continuous process of development toward

a higher and higher realization of a definite ideal, but because the circumstances under each state of Western life could never fit in well among themselves.

Let us take some more concrete cases. The Western civilization is found generally in urban areas. The people are concentrated in towns and cities of the Western countries. A good many of them live there by shifting from hotel to hotel or from apartment to apartment or from town to town just for the sake of shifting—for a little change reminding one of the same old nomadic habit of man. They live and die amidst thrills of changes, but without a fixed place in nature. There may be people having their fixed homes to live in, but their number is quite limited. They usually live in what may be called the residential quarters of a town or city. If a foreigner, especially from some old Oriental country, goes to visit such places, he will certainly notice that although these people have their own fixed homes built snugly to form a fine neighbourhood they hardly cultivate any real neighbourly spirit among

themselves. They live as neighbours without knowing one another intimately. If they come to meet together they cover themselves up with all the cobwebs of social formality hardly having a chance to taste of the pure happiness of social intermingling. One should not be surprised if they are found to keep watchful eyes, like spies, upon one another. Something interesting may be happening in one of the families, but they know about it through the local newspaper rather than by any direct means. In their dealings with one another they seem so afraid to be frank that one may wonder if there has been any real change from that old neighbourly life of fear and suspicion.

Many of these Western people go out to visit other countries. If they see people in some places passing around in scanty clothes, they seem to take it as a revolting scene of savage life. In fact this is one of the strong reasons why they do not see how the Indians, especially those in their loin cloths, can be called civilized. Instead of trying to understand why these people choose to go around in scanty

clothes they want to see them as fully dressed as they are. They have succeeded in making many tribal people of the world give up their old simple but comfortable clothes for trousers, coat, hat, and necktie. And now we see that in many Western countries the people have begun to like scanty clothes for themselves. The nudist colonies in the West are extending as well as increasing. The Western advocates of nudism are now coming to preach to those people who had been made not long ago to dress themselves like the Westerners. Does scanty clothing or nudity become a sign of civilization and progress when adopted by the Western people, probably as a change from their full-dress style, and then passed through them to other peoples of the world—the very peoples who were once told that their scanty clothing showed they were uncivilized ? Is not this change just an imitation of those whom they have the presumption to teach about civilization ?

It is the love for change—mere change—which seems to characterize the life of the West. There was a time, not very long ago, when

the Western people used to paint their bodies with woad. They gave it up and condemned those as savage who would do it. Many primitive people are still condemned for such simple practice of their own. Yet, if a person likes to see now who are the people among whom tattooing is most popular, let him look at the bodies of the army and navy people of the West. Let him look at the things tattooed on their skins and compare the aesthetic taste of these 'civilized' Westerners with that of the primitive people. And who can forget, in this connection, the "advanced" women of the West! What are all their lipsticks, rouge, cutex, etc., for, if not for satisfying the same old desire to make themselves attractive to the public eye ? It is said that it is the modern way of living. What is there so modern about it ? The women of ancient Egypt used vanity boxes with compartments for as many as eight kinds of cosmetics. The Hindu women even of the days of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* had also similar boxes of cosmetics. They have been using their own rich variety even to-day. The Mohammedan

women have been probably more elaborate in this respect than any other women. The Western women have just adopted a similar method of beauty culture. The only thing in which they seem to show some peculiarity of their own is perhaps their strange modern practice of pulling out the eye-brows altogether and painting thin black arches in these places. We do not know if any Oriental women ever sought to beautify themselves in this strange manner. The anthropologists can say if any savage people tried a similar method. Otherwise, it certainly is something for which the Western women may get the laurel of originality. It, however, remains to be seen whether this kind of mutilation is a mutation or a progress or just a simple change.

At any rate, from what we have seen, it is not strange if we find it difficult to understand how the Western people can talk so confidently of their progress.

Even if there were real progress in the Western civilization, would that make any comparison of it with the civilization of India much profitable to the Western people ? Supposing

it is progress when the old favourite profession of the Vikings and the Buccaneers is substituted by that of the imperialists, when the inquisitionists and the witch-hunters become Christian soldiers or missionaries, when lying becomes propaganda, cheating becomes diplomacy, secret intriguing becomes peace-pact, orgic luxury becomes high standard of living, and so on, would such kind of progress make the Western people more advanced in civilization than the Indians who discarded such things long time ago for some other things which their experience has taught them to be better and more worth-while ? It is true India's progress has for some time been very slow, while the West has been moving fast. But toward what is the West moving ? What is its goal ? Do India and the West have a common goal ? Are both of them on the same path ? Should we not know the answer to such questions first before we can indulge in any cultural comparison ? Or, is there any civilization in the bumptious method of national self-advertisement ?

However, it is unfortunately a fact that with all its fine organic unity our civilization has not been able to make any notable progress for the last few hundred years. Some people think that it has stopped altogether from moving forward and is living only upon its past. In the meantime many kinds of unhealthy superstitions have grown within it, like wild weeds, spoiling its pristine beauty and threatening its growth.

A careful analysis of the recent history of India will show that the inordinate break in the progress of her dynamic civilization has been caused by the forced introduction of some foreign elements into its system. The people of India have not been able to adjust with their civilization the alien stuff on account of its inherent aggressive character. Nor have they been able to throw it out. But they must do either this or that. Otherwise, its threatening presence remains a constant danger to their civilization. This is a problem which they have to solve first before they can engage themselves with undivided attention in any work of progress. This is why their thoughts

are drawn most of the time to this question while they should be trying to do something else for the cause of civilization.

India has been forced to slow her pace of progress and even to stop in order that she does not lose what she has already achieved. When that fear is gone, she will again surprise and enrich the world with the progress of her civilization.

CHAPTER IV

MYSTICAL INDIANISM

If there is any single idea that can adequately represent India, it is mysticism. Never did I feel so convinced about it as after I returned from my sojourn in America about a decade ago. While in that new world, I tried to learn all that I could from a close study of the Western form of life. As a result of it I was slowly persuaded to develop inclinations toward atheism. With such inclinations I often heard many Christian missionaries who had returned from India after their long mission work. I heard them talk before large congregations of American people on what they graphically described as horrible superstitions of India. They talked with a subtle air of sarcasm giving lurid pictures of idol worship. The curious people always reacted by laughing at the " poor superstitious Hindus " and heartily approving the mission work to 'save' the benighted heathen souls.

Being one of India I naturally felt humbled. But my atheistic inclinations heartened me with the consolation that those very people and their missionaries were no less superstitious and ridiculous than the Hindus. They saw me also laugh with them and probably thought that I shared their reactions. Some of them would approach me after the meeting with an air of condescending sympathy and smilingly ask me if I were a Hindu. Imagine their surprise when they heard me proudly answer in the affirmative.

I had also occasions to hear many educated Americans who had either been in India or made extensive studies at home about the Indian civilization. They, of course, talked about things which baffled their understanding, but in their liberality of heart they, instead of dubbing them in the usual missionary fashion, would hold them as profound peculiarities of mysterious India. If I laughed also with them, it was because such talks on mysteries and the mysterious would at that time serve only to amuse me. I returned to India with almost a challenging spirit.

But it did not take India long to bring me round and re-impress my mind against the futile habit of rational cocksureness. I might not have regained my old naive appreciation of talks on mysteries and the mysterious, but neither could I see any depth in the missionary understanding of the so-called superstitions of the Hindus. The serene and ineffable grandeur, which blends wonderfully with the underlying truth of things Indian, began again to divert my mind from the narrow circumscribed view of the surface. And how long could a critical mind retain itself before the silent admonition of hoary India not to be too hasty and thus lose sight of the great truth which enables her to hold together the ponderous mass of diverse phenomena which would elsewhere fight against one another with their rank inconsistencies !

It may appear very strange to a foreigner that a country like India, which has never failed to produce great and noble thinkers in every age of its history, should have allowed so many heterogeneous masses of people possessing all possible grades of culture and

civilization. His intensely scientific propensity may let him go over the statistical informations of the latest Indian Census and balk at the conception of the Indians as a nation or a people or of India as a country, but he will be only holding his mind upon such an aspect of things Indian as has never been a true criterion of the Indian life. We in India can realize the difficulty of the average foreigner to see our country in its true perspective. He has been brought up in a different environment and taught to know India, during the formative period of his life, through missionary literature, especially of the Abbe Dubois type. His mental attitude has been already formed, and he comes to India only to see the concrete pictures of his ideas. He sees little more than what he has learnt. But it requires more than an ordinary mind to cleanse itself of its fond prejudices and fantastic idola and then to look at India with the penetrating eye of a Margaret Noble or a Fielding Hall.

The usual type of missionary writers, since the time of Francis Xavier, has always sought to impress upon the Western mind a very

pernicious theory regarding human life in the tropical climate. They have shown extraordinary avidity in their literary craftsmanship to insist directly or indirectly that man in a tropical country is by nature too passionate or sensual, more like the beast of the jungle than like the man of the cold or temperate climate. It is not very hard for an Indian to recognize the fecundity of their imagination in their skill to weave out instances pointing to this theory. They have got their loyal pupils also in some half-baked anthropologists who would give it their support by a sort of " scientific " manipulation of such instances. It has been a long time, about eight hundred years, that the people of the tropical climate have been regarded in this opprobrious manner. And it is not quite impossible now to find individuals even among the " natives " who would quietly accept the theory.

As we come to know more intimately the peoples of all different climates including the Western people, we can realize how little regard for truth the missionaries and their racial adherents in other fields of study have shown

in their general estimation of the tropical people. It is not true, not at least of tropical India of which we know better than others, that the tropical people are more passionate or sensually inclined than the people of cold or temperate climate. Our experience of various people including the Western has enabled us to make a comparative study and to form a different conclusion altogether.

Nevertheless, there have been frequent attempts to rationalize the ugly conception about the tropical people. It is said that nature in the tropical climate is bounteous and man's struggle for existence is not so hard. The tropical man is, therefore, not very active. In his idle life it is natural for him to give undue indulgences to his passions and thus to cultivate the animal side of life. As he has more time to spend in this manner than the man of the colder climate, whose struggle for existence is necessarily much harder, his life shows more brute indulgences than the life of the latter.

It is not difficult to see that there are some naive assumptions in this sort of rationaliza-

tion. First, the tropical man is idle because he does not have to struggle hard for his living. Second, in his idleness he feels the natural inclination to indulge in his brute passion. Third, the man of the colder climate is less indulgent in brute life because he has to keep himself busy most of the time to make his living.

A little examination of these assumptions may reveal their inherent defects. The tropical man is not necessarily idle because he does not have to work hard for his living. If his body is not engaged in doing something, his mind may be; and where the mind is active in something of absorbing interest, the body has to be at rest. The tropical Indian is not necessarily idle because he is found to sit quiet for hours together. Even if he ever happens to be idle, he is not so crude and vile by nature and tradition as to seek enjoyment only in brute indulgences. His environment is so exquisite and diverting that it has always plenty to fill his idle moments. Besides, the traditional ideal of *Brahmacharyya*, which enjoins a life of perfect conti-

nence during one's student life, creates in one a natural desire to struggle for as much purity as possible. As regards the third assumption, it is difficult to understand how a man can be any better by busying himself most of the time with his physical needs and finding little respite to be at peace with himself. As long as a man lives only to work for his physical needs, he is not above the animal level, and it is he alone who is more likely to seek animal indulgences in case he can make a gap between his busy moments. It is not among the "natives" in tropical India that one will find the problem of using the leisure time.

Perhaps there has been a little digression from the main topic. But it has been necessary to clear certain misconceptions from the general background. We may now turn to understand what is there that makes India so unique.

It is undoubtedly true that nature in the tropical climate is very generous and man finds his life in it comparatively easier. In tropical India, however, nature is not only

very generous but also extraordinarily beautiful. An Indian may express his deep feeling of gratitude for the innumerable gifts which nature makes in great abundance that man may live, but he finds no expression of his feeling adequate enough in the midst of its infinite beauty. What is there that makes nature in India so beautiful? It is in its richest variety. Variety makes beauty. Nature has given India everything to make her a splendid epitome of the world. Leaving aside its liberal gifts for the physical needs of man, an Indian sees with a feeling of awe and wonder all the fine phenomenal changes that go on around him morning and evening, day and night, month after month, indeed throughout the six beautiful seasons that make up India's year. There is an everlasting attractiveness in such rich variety of natural phenomena, and the Indian cannot wholly turn his mind away from it even when he must work for his physical needs. He tries to leave his work whenever he can in order to have his share of the general enjoyment of nature. Apparently, he may look as

if he loves to be idle, while in reality he only tries to respond to the natural urge for inward composure which makes his enjoyment possible.

Nature with its infinite generosity and unparalleled beauty keeps the Indian mind very much attached to it. Excepting the few hours of the night which he spends in sleeping he hardly likes to be inside his cottage which shuts out the wonderful scenery of the grand infinite outside. His love for nature is so intense and constant that he is often taken for a nature worshipper. He looks at the sun, the moon, and the stars, nay even at the sky and the ocean with a profound feeling of reverence, inasmuch as to him they with their vastness and grandeur point to the Great Infinite. His sublime *Usha* or morning twilight introduces him to the richest variety of nature and thus supplies him with a glimpse of the infinite as revealed by light. His serene *Sandhya* or evening twilight takes that nature away from him to let him have another glimpse of the infinite as revealed by darkness. Whatever of nature may appear to his senses

simultaneously reveals its close association with the infinite. Thus, in all this panoramic view of the infinite, he lives and moves with his mind almost unconsciously reaping the moral and spiritual benefit which is bound to accrue from such environment. The thought of the infinite coming along with every thought of a finite object expands his mental horizon and seeks to hold him high that there may not be any lowering influence. If, indeed, the tropical heat adds to the strength of his passions and impulses, the tropical beauty and grandeur of nature serve to sublimate them into a strong mystical spirit that finds enjoyment in his silent appreciation of nature. Those passions and impulses that characterize the brute in man may, when sublimated, become a fine emotion to rouse the divine in him. Nature has enabled India to form a highly elevating tradition in which the Indian is born and brought up to develop that fine emotion Had it been otherwise, his passions and impulses would have been exceedingly stimulated by the warm tropical climate and turned him into

a dangerously clever brute seeking only to harness all his physical forces to fight his environment for the satisfaction of his gross little self. He would have thrown away his sacred *Upanishads* and looked for something like the ethics of Aristippus and the metaphysics of Hobbes. But he is not that type of man. The "meek Hindu" has become a proverbial expression. It suggests a characteristic feeling which makes an Indian seek friendly relation not only with men but with everything that forms his environment.

The friendly and respectful attitude with which the Hindu looks upon nature reacts upon his being in a highly elevating manner. It is a simple psychological truth that a feeling good or bad acts in order to stimulate itself. It functions to grow. The fine spirit which the Hindu cultivates in all his relation with the natural phenomena seeks to suffuse his whole being and is thus not without its sublimating touch upon his brute impulses. He feels the joy of it, and as he does so he also realizes the highly moral and spiritual benefit derived from that spirit. If he cultivates good

feeling with his natural environment, he cannot help doing the same with his social environment too. In fact to him the distinction between the natural and the social environment is rather arbitrary. He finds that there is an essential relation among all objects of creation and that each of them has the touch of the infinite. The Hindu loves almost spontaneously to establish family relationship with every natural object, animate as well as inanimate.

Some Western people who have lived or have been living in India for a long time may come forward to deny the above statement. They may allege with full confidence that there is no such thing in India as sublimated emotion. In fact, they may laugh at this view as wholly unfounded and ridiculous.

These people are not quite few, nor are they a trivial sort. Many of them may belong to the group of Rudyard Kipling. This English poet of Indian origin had the cheek to say that in the east of Suez "there ain't no Ten Commandments." And Kipling certainly has many powerful supporters. One can easily understand that India is especially

included in this 'east of Suez.' Naturally their view comes in direct opposition to what has already been said. But it is not hard to account for such differences.

These people are typically colonial by nature. Whether they are born in Europe or in India, they have their exclusively European environment and tradition, in the midst of which they live and grow. It is true that they are in India but they live as if they are in their own country in Europe In their dress, food and drink, manners and customs, indeed in everything, they try faithfully to follow their mother country without caring to remember that life in the cold climate of their country is lived under different natural conditions. Consequently, they do not avail themselves of the opportunities supplied by nature and of the tradition of India. Such manner of living being in opposition to the natural conditions of the place tends to make them impervious to the higher influences of India. Furthermore, the maladjustment caused in them by such living acts adversely upon their moral and spiritual being and serves to stimulate

their lower impulses—a fact which they realize very well but cannot remedy. This is why, when they go back to their country, they show themselves to be a different type of men, in some respects rather lower than their own kith and kin who live at home. Perhaps this is also why they refuse to believe that in India nature helps to sublimate the passions and impulses of man into higher emotion. If in the tropical climate they find themselves oppressed by lower impulses during their long vacant time, they would not understand how the "natives" can avoid being similarly oppressed. From their little European environment artificially introduced in India, they look with scorn and disgust at the "natives" enjoying their time in the silent admiration and appreciation of nature. With their mental conditions under such circumstances, they can hardly see the truth of any statement referring to the sublimated emotion of the Hindu.

But the fact is that it is there. It is there in spite of so many diverse phenomena that peculiarly characterize India. Nay, it would be more correct to say "because of" than

" in spite of " such diversities. India does not deny that her children belong to many racial types, that they speak several closely related languages, maintain many forms of religious belief, and possess many grades of civilization. She does not deny that her children represent not one but many levels of social, moral, and spiritual life. But to her critics she may say, "Do you not see anything more than all these diversities ? Can you not find, behind the various racial types possessing so many grades of civilization there is something which enables you and every other foreigner to recognize that they are Indians ? Just mix with them a little closely, and you will find that *something* which all Indians possess in common, no matter how they differ in their outward ways of life." What is that *something* ? The answer does not need to be re-described in full. It is the spirit to befriend all that exists, to touch that fine inner feeling which can recognize and appreciate diversity in order to develop and enjoy unity. It is this spirit which has enabled India not to condemn things which seem strangely

different and antagonize those who possess them, but to seek wholesome interpretation of them so as to achieve self-improvement. It is this spirit which has enabled India to hold together in peace all forms of life from the crudest to the most refined. The Indian should regard himself very fortunate to find nature so profoundly engaging to his feeling which unconsciously undergoes a process of sublimation to crystallize slowly into this noble spirit.

One can easily imagine that this spirit is essentially mystical. Although it may appear very plain at first, it ceases to be so as one tries to understand it. Its clear recognition is in the domain of one's inner feeling. And the language of the feeling is never perfectly audible or intelligible. But we may choose to call this peculiar spirit as Mystical Indianism.

India sought to cultivate this spirit since the ancient days of the Vedas. It especially revealed itself in the making of the Atharva Veda which incorporated such primitive stuff as magic, charms, and incantations as a distinct recognition, in the wide ambit of her

great social polity, even of people possessing that cultural grade. Otherwise, how strange it seems that such materials could assume the position as sacred as the lofty ideas of the other Vedas ! The same spirit could be found in the transition from the Absolute *Brahman* of the *Upanishads* to the numerous gods and goddesses of the *Puranas*, and from the highly profound forms of such deities to simply stocks and stones. These are all sacred in the religious system of the Hindus, for all have their uses in the spiritual uplift of some stage of humanity or other. If the spiritual yearning of a simple-hearted Indian finds its satisfaction in offering his worship to a crude form which he calls his god, the devout Hindu who enjoys meditating on the formless *Brahman* does not try to impose his subtle metaphysics upon his naive mind, fearing that it being beyond his inward preparation may serve only to confuse him in the initial stage of his spiritual quest. Without the necessary inward preparation on his part, he may be urged to discard his favourite deity and to meditate on the grand conception of the

formless *Brahman*, but he would be practising closing his eyes for meditation to see nothing but clumsy darkness and professing that conception to make himself at best an adept in religious sophistication. Hinduism has neither condemned such form of worship nor neglected the worshipper. If it allows any form which is religiously inspiring to its worshipper, it has also taken good care to fill that form with spiritual contents that are clearly derived from its highest conception. The form or the idol matters little if the ideas which occupy the mind of the devotee are spiritually inspiring, for in his worship his idol shines in the beauty of his ideas. Yet, by allowing such individual freedom, Hinduism does not repel itself from any person, and this is necessary in the early stage of his spiritual life. When he grows in his spiritual consciousness by passing through that stage, he slowly forgets the outward form for the sake of the inward ideas which gradually acquire richer and deeper meaning for him.

It is this mystical spirit of India which enables her not to show impatience at the

apparent contradictions of her religious practices. The person who is spiritually prepared to meditate upon the Absolute *Brahman* cannot be intolerent of those who worship in some form or other. With his preparation he can thoroughly understand that the Absolute comprehends all forms and transcends them too. He can thus accommodate them, supposing that they are limited in their religious consciousness. And besides, no spirit of intolerance is consistent with and conducive to one's high spiritual attainment.

The existence of so many forms of religious belief from the crudest to the most refined and so many cultural grades may give occasion to some problem at present from certain political standpoints, but it has been very hard to override the traditional spirit and force the problem to the forefront. Besides pointing out the great experimental value of such conditions, it also engages the mind in certain ratiocination which has its own inherent strength. Thus, it may take up the question of the extremes in the cultural life of India. The extremes are usually alike in many

respects, and one may not be always right in discriminating the two. The distinction between magic and miracle, animism and mysticism, idolatry and ideolatry, a lunatic and a genius, and so on, is, when these are closely analysed, not very well pronounced. Consequently, a good man has to be slow in judging things which stand in such extremes, and probably it is not unwise to let time prove their intrinsic worth or worthlessness. Truth does not need advertisement or any other artificial support, and any impatience or intolerance in its name against something reflects unfavourably upon it. Intolerance is born of the lack of self-confidence and self-conviction. It is a negative virtue and inconsistent with the spirit of India.

And finally, love for diversity comes from man's inner sense of beauty. India has found its high ethical import in nature, and if she has not much interfered with the diverse forms of her social and cultural life, she has sought thereby to follow nature as far as possible in evolving her own civilization. Diversity alone makes unity possible, and where there is unity,

there is beauty. There is no beauty in uniformity. The saddest thing in the world of culture today is the mad pursuit of man to create a dull uniformity everywhere, and India feels it more bitterly than any other civilized country.

CHAPTER V

CULTURE AND IDEAL OF INDIA

If the conception of civilization has been very vague to most of the people, that of culture has been no less ; for the two conceptions are closely related. We often talk about culture, although most of us will probably fumble, like Thrasymachus before Socrates, when asked about the definite meaning of it. Indeed, what do we mean by culture ? Referring to it Matthew Arnold has said a good deal of "sweetness and light" and Schiller of "grace and dignity." Certain ethnologists make it almost synonymous with civilization. According to them, culture, as Professor Sapir puts it, "embodies any socially inherited element in the life of man, material and spiritual." If we are to be a little Aristotelian, we may show the distinction by pointing out that a particular civilization is the matter whose form is its culture. And if we would choose to be a little poetical, we might say that culture is to a

civilization as sweet smell is to a flower. Each culture has its distinctiveness like the distinct smell of a particular kind of flower.

To be more clear, culture is that peculiar spirit which emanates from all the varied manifestations of a civilization. It involves, in the language of Sapir again, " those general attitudes, views of life, and specific manifestations of civilization, that give a particular people its distinctive place in the world." It is the expression of a richly varied and yet somehow unified and consistent attitude towards life, an attitude which sees the significance of any one element of civilization in its relation to all others. Or briefly, it is that intangible yet all-pervasive something in the whole structure of a civilization which seeks to cultivate the inner and the outer life of the people possessing that civilization.

Indian culture is naturally India's peculiarity. Its beginning was in the feeling of awe and wonder, of harmony and adjustment. The ancient Aryan sages, even though they found the forces of nature often becoming threatening, thought not of conquering but befriending

them. They maintained a kind of sublime hylozoism to energize and elevate themselves through mystical communion with the spirit of nature. They probably found it more worthwhile to befriend than to conquer. Indeed, as a principle they found more heroism in the former act which involved self-conquest than in the latter which pleased the baser tendencies in man against his finer. They sought the spirit behind matter—the god behind natural phenomena. Such nature-gods as Indra, Varuna, Agni, Sabita were the sacred symbols of the varied manifestations of the grandeur and majesty of one immanent Spirit. So they said,

Yo devo agnau, yo apsu, yo visvam
bhubanamavivesa,
Ya osadhisu, yo vanaspatisu,
tasmai devaya namo namah.

" That refulgent One who is in fire and water, who is immanent in the entire universe, who is in herbs and woods, to that God I bow again and again."

In order to realize that one great Spirit in

all the varied objects of nature, they sought to establish family relationships even with those objects. Earth was mother, air father, light the dear fellow, ocean the great friend, and so on. (*Matar medini, tata maruta, sakhe jyotih, subandho jalandre,* etc.) Thus, the ancient literature of India speaks of a very beautiful beginning of her culture. It was born in the finer feeling of man—in the feeling of adoration and adjustment.

When the Aryan culture came in contact with the Dravidian, it could not think of any crusade against the latter. It could not think of destroying outright even the crude forms of the aboriginal culture. For it would be Indian culture contradicting itself. Where the basic principle of culture is harmony and adjustment, the idea of destruction is clearly irrelevant. The Aryan culture had to seek adjustment with the different forms of other indigenous cultures including the highly developed culture of the Dravidians. So we find many ideas, alien to the Aryan mind, incorporated in the Vedic literature, especially in the Atharva Veda. The adjustment was achieved by the Aryan culture

with the other culture systems of pre-Aryan India in spite of their incongruities, which slowly lost themselves in the one suffusing spirit of harmony. This achievement of the Aryan culture revealed no offensive self-consciousness but sufficient self-confidence with which it embraced all ideas and ideals from the grossest to the most profound, and then refined them all into one Indian type with the help of that cultural spirit.

So the Indian culture maintains a wonderful unity in the midst of a great variety, one lofty ideal behind all the seemingly inconsistent ideas, one unique spirit behind all the varied appearances. It is said in the scripture,

Veda vibhinnah smritayor vibhinnah,
Nasau muniryasya matam na bhinnam.

"There are the different Vedas and the different Smritis. There is not a sage whose view is not different." Indeed, how different is the Atharva Veda from the other three, how different the Smritis in their contents! While such great philosophical systems as Sankhya, Vaisheshika, and Mimamsa seek to explain the

whole cosmic system without clearly postulating *Para-Brahman* or Absolute God, there are systems like Nyaya and Yoga that base themselves on a purely theistic principle; and Vedanta philosophy seeks to reduce everything, all plurality, into Absolute *Brahman*. The Lokayatas challenge the authority of the Vedas and naively uphold a form of gross hedonism. The Jainas and the Buddhists are equally proud of their non-theistic principles of ethics. Thus the Indian mind has freely sought to explore all spheres of thought, from the grossest to the finest, from the most devotional to the most sceptical, and opened up all the possible ranges of human perspective so that life could determine itself without being thwarted from any direction.

Toleration has been the result—toleration that causes intimacy and not indifference. Where difference is tolerated with a genuine good feeling, man's social attitude ceases to be offensively critical, while he begins to be self-critical. Indian culture naturally tends toward introspection. It is the inward world into which it has always sought to direct the

Indian mind. The infinite richness of that world has caused the building up of one universal ideal—the ideal of self-realization.

It is a very comprehensive ideal. It takes into account not only the unfoldment and enjoyment of the wonderful world within, but also, as an auxiliary to it, the realization of the same self in all objects, animate as well as inanimate, of the world without. The unity of spirit maintained by the Indian culture cannot but conceive of the unity of life making man not the lord of creation but just a part of nature. Indeed, self-realization begins with the realization of one-self in others and ends in destroying all sense of otherness. The absence of otherness means the realization of the Absolute. Self-realization thus means God-realization.

Such an ideal invariably fosters an underlying principle of conciliation among the divergent elements of Indian culture. Each cultural group with all its differences may accept and interpret the ideal of self-realization in its own way—atheistic Lokayatas, protestant Jainas and the Buddhists, Dwaita-

vadis or dualists, Vishistadwaitavadis or qualified non-dualists, and Adwaitavadis or absolutists. There might have been some occasional fracas superficially, but that was due to the presence of the ignorant or partially educated elements in each group and not to that of those who were at the head. For no group could ideally think of harbouring a dissentious spirit in its cultural existence. Self-realization has always been the goal for all, may it involve self-satisfaction or Nirvana or Samadhi— all depending upon one's taste and preparation reflecting one's level of cultural development.

The goal may be the same, the paths are not. Human tendencies vary, and it is natural for each tendency to follow the course suited to itself. If health is the end of all living bodies, the same food cannot certainly be the means for all to that end. What is sauce to the gander may not be sauce to the goose. In order to get proper nourishment for physical health, different kinds of food are necessary for different kinds of men. The same is true of men's spiritual health. An absolute creed is a danger to humanity at large.

So the paths are different. They are determined by the general tendencies in men. Humanity shows three general tendencies, *viz.*, of action, of meditation or reflection, and of devotion. There are always some people in society who take special delight in action, some in meditation or reflection, and some in devotion. Indian culture has, accordingly, laid down three different paths corresponding to the three tendencies—*Karma* or action, *Jnana* or reflection, and *Bhakti* or devotion—all leading to the same goal. The choice is left to man. If there is any other choice possible beyond the scope of these general three, Indian culture would be all the more richer by addition and would not think of destruction.

The three general tendencies are not absolutistic either. People who are highly fond of action may not be totally averse to reflection or devotion. Nor are those of highly reflective nature very much disinclined to action or devotion. And the devotional people are not altogether inactive and unreflective. Each preponderant tendency partakes in some degree of the other two in all men. This

explains man's unity in diversity. The supremacy of one tendency over the other two in some men makes them different from some others, yet the existence of all the three tendencies in all men, in some degree more or less, prevents them from being truly antagonistic on account of their mutual difference.

The three general paths have been devised to cultivate the three tendencies in man. When these are properly cultivated their adjustment becomes easy and a peaceful state is attained within. Self-realization is possible only when peace has been attained within the man.

The cultivation of the spirit of internal adjustment toward the ideal of self-realization naturally means the need of the path of action. It is the first need for man, inasmuch as it seeks to refine all that is crude and disturbing in him. But not all men are equally crude or advanced in all respects. There is always some difference in human developments and proclivities. These should determine their position in society. Hence is the rise of the caste system. The present condition

of the Indian caste system is bad ; it has become bad for many reasons, internal as well as external. But the caste system as it was originally conceived on the principles of duties and mutual obligations, the one that was based upon a sagacious consideration of the difference in human tastes and tendencies, of the levels of moral and spiritual excellence, could invariably promise a stable society and steady progress for all individuals. India has failed to observe strictly her original caste principles, because her social cohesion has too often been disturbed by the incursions of alien social forces which have proved sometimes too intransigent for all her attempt at adjustment. Yet the caste system has maintained, till recently, its wonderful solidarity under heavy odds. No sense of rivalry or competition which characterizes the caste in many other countries has sought to displace its basic principle, the principle of co-operation with a clear sense of mutual obligation.

For the proper guidance of men with varied intellectual development and emotional refinement toward the same ideal, education

necessarily has to be diversified in its outward form while remaining the same in its essential contents. Not all people are prepared to understand and appreciate the profound metaphysics of the *Upanishads*. They seem to be too deep and impossible for the masses. They are meant for the *Jnanis* or sages who have so well cultivated their inner faculties as to take a genuine interest in abstract studies, in the deeper meaning of things and ideas. But the masses have to be educated in the Indian ideal. This is possible when the abstract ideas are skilfully expressed in story-forms, tinged with the highest flight of imagination. Accordingly, the profound verities of the *Upanishads* have been clothed by means of sacred stories into the *Puranas* to strike the imagination of the people and slowly draw them in. The *Puranas* are the sacred stories of hundreds of gods and goddesses symbolizing the higher virtues of life and inspiring the same in the people at large by their extraordinary feats which show a wonderful blend of the human and the divine to connect our earth with the above.

The epic literature of India reveals to us how the principles of the *Upanishads* were applied in the lives of the ancient Indians. Their wonderful struggles for the vindication of those principles, their successes and failures —all have been very beautifully depicted in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and have thus made them a perennial source of inspiration to the people of India.

The Vedas, the Puranas, and the Epics have always been regarded as the sacred literature in India. They are sacred because they uphold her noble ideal, and they uphold it in diverse ways to suit the different kinds of people.

This does not mean that India has not produced any other kind of literature than the above. She has a vast wealth of original literature in science—a fact which would be attested by anyone who has studied the history of the different sciences. Her literary contributions to art, *viz.*, drama, music, dancing, etc., have been equally rich. But the peculiarity of them all is that they have not been inconsistent with the noble ideal of the land ; they have rather been always inspiring.

The path of action prepares man through such elaborate processes for devotion and meditation. Man has to work, that is his nature. But he has the freedom to choose his work when he is convinced of its benefit. In deference to the ideal of India, the *Bhagabat Gita* discusses how work, instead of fettering man, can truly help him if it is taken up with total indifference to the result thereof. It is the thought of the result that causes disturbance in the mind and thus obstructs inner harmony. While disinterested work slowly refines the inward impulses and prepares him to be devotional and meditative. Then he can enjoy himself through either way or both. Then he can see that the three ways are all sacred like the three rivers of India—the Ganges, the Jumna, and the Saraswati—all meeting somewhere and leading jointly to the eternal ocean of truth.

CHAPTER VI

THE SACRED GANGES AND THE JUMNA

The mythical origin of these two most sacred rivers of India points out the highly devotional spirit with which they are regarded by the Hindus. Whoever has seen them at some considerable length, especially where amidst the deep silence of the great Himalayas they glide straight down, like two strings of sparkling silver, must have noticed the imposing grandeur which nature has poured upon them. It is so profoundly mystical that it never fails to impress the Hindu mind. But this is not the only reason why the Hindus look upon these two rivers with a lofty spiritual feeling.

The river Ganges represents wisdom. Most of the ancient Rishis of India used to live in the *Tapobanas* (lit., forests for meditation) upon the banks of the Ganges. There they underwent long austere life of

meditation to develop their inward power of intuition, so that they could know about the truth of things and life. There they freely and boldly discussed what they came to know, and having satisfactorily explained their points of view they put them into comprehensive systems so that others might study, understand, and profit by them. They lived in the thought world and their lives fully reflected the nature of their thoughts. The sacred memories of these Rishis, who still inspire and guide the Hindu life, is so intimately associated with the Ganges that when one pays homage to the former, by one's daily life, the latter is invariably included in it. The Ganges comes along in the mind with the thoughts of the Rishis. What is more important to understand the highly spiritual feeling of the Hindu for the Ganges is that while the great Rishis of old are living only in his lofty principles of life, the Ganges still flows on as mystically and inspiringly before his physical senses as she did fifty centuries ago. She is not only in his thought and in his ideal world, but she is also in his actual world of to-day. She is

still the Mother-Ganges of India's millions. Many of them still choose to live by her sides and thus sanctify their mind and body in the blessed atmosphere she emits.

Similarly, the river Jumna represents devotion. It was on her luxurious banks that the most perfect form of devotion showed itself in all its five possible manifestations. Our devotional spirit is manifested in five different ways, which in India are called Santa, Dasya, Sakhya, Vatsalya, and Madhura. The devotional spirit which characterises the joy of the Great Realization following the attainment of inward peace is termed Santa Bhava. The Dasya form of devotion is found in the devotee's joy to serve his beloved eagerly. The Sakhya form is what exists between two real friends. The Vatsalya form is in the sublime feeling of the parents for their child. The Madhura form is in the sweet feeling that characterises the relation between husband and wife. All these five forms were perfectly manifested in the devotional spirit with which Krishna, the God incarnate of the Hindus, was treated. Man cannot think of a finer

example of emotional refinement. The whole atmosphere on both sides of the Jumna was so surcharged with the deep spirit of devotion that even birds and animals were imbued with it. Love in its purest form poured itself upon every heart making all men totally forgetful of themselves. In that extreme suffusion of love all things glowed with the halo of sacredness. These places are now holy and things there are sacred. How can anybody think of violence of any sort at a place where nature itself has shaken off its usual grimness, as if to remind India perpetually that here was performed an ineffaceable episode of love and devotion so exalted, abundant, perfect, and touching in all its varied manifestations that nothing but the purest forms of feeling can characterise this place? When a Hindu thinks of real love, he has before his mind's eye that unforgettable *Braja Lila* (divine sport at Braja) of Krishna. He is reminded of the self-forgetting devotion of Nanda and Yasoda, of Radha, of the shepherd boys and girls, of Arjuna and Bidura. And when he thinks of them, the

river Jumna comes along in his mind, for she is the living witness of those golden days. The Jumna is sacred, for she represents that divine spirit of devotion. And does not the great Tajmahal, that ever-white mausoleum, stand on the bank of the Jumna as the purest picture of conjugal devotion ? Let anybody watch that Jumna as she flows on quietly through the district of Mathura or by the side of the Tajmahal and let him tell us how he feels. He will not need any explanation then as to why the Jumna is said to represent devotion.

The Ganges and the Jumna flow on quietly a long distance and finally meet at Allahabad from where they flow on together for another long distance till they lose themselves in the sea. In a like manner, wisdom and devotion invariably meet somewhere and then move on together for some time until the two in one are lost in the sea of truth. Neither wisdom nor devotion alone would reach the goal. Wisdom is dry by itself continually soaking and sapping its own sweet fluidity. Devotion, of course, contains an inexhaustible

fund of fluid faith but is itself blind and needs the guidance of wisdom. The Ganges of wisdom and the Jumna of devotion must meet together in order to flow as one to reach finally the eternal sea of truth.

The wonderful mysticism which seems to surround these two great rivers has for itself also some other reason which is supported by modern scientific investigation. The Hindus think that the Ganges and the Jumna are not just rivers. They are more than rivers. They are possessed of mysterious powers which are not found in any other rivers of the world. That this is true has been borne out by renowned scientists of our time.

For instance, the distinguished bacteriologist, Dr. F. C. Harrison, Principal of the Macdonald College, McGill University in Canada, writes in an article "Micro-organisms in Water," "A peculiar fact, which has never been satisfactorily explained, is the quick death (in three to five hours) of the cholera vibrio in the waters of the Ganges and the Jumna. When one remembers that these rivers are grossly contaminated by sewage, by

numerous corpses of natives (often dead of cholera), and by the bathing of thousands of natives, it seems remarkable that the belief of the Hindus, that the water of these rivers is pure and cannot be defiled, and that they can safely drink it and bathe in it, should be confirmed by means of modern bacteriological research. It is also a curious fact that the bactericidal power of the Jumna water is lost when it is boiled ; and that the cholera vibrio propagates at once, if placed in water taken from the wells in the vicinity of the rivers."

A very well-known French physician, Dr. D'Herelle, made similar investigations into the mystery of the Ganges. He observed some of the floating corpses of men dead of dysentery and cholera and was surprised to find " that only a few feet below the bodies, where one would expect to find millions of these dysentery and cholera germs" there were no germs at all. " He then grew germs from patients having the disease and to these cultures added water from the river (Ganges). When he incubated the mixture for a period, much to his surprise the germs were completely destroyed."

A British physician, Dr. C. E. Nelson, F.R.C.S., tells us of another striking fact. He says that " ships leaving Calcutta for England take their water from the Hugli River which is one of the mouths of the filthy Ganges and this Ganges water will remain fresh all the way to England. On the other hand, ships leaving England for India find that the water they take on in London will not stay fresh till they reach Bombay, the nearest Indian port, which is a week closer to England than Calcutta. They must replenish their water supply at Port Said, Suez, or at Aden on the Red Sea."

When the veteran scientists of the West, upon whom the sacred tradition of India has no influence at all, are surprised by the peculiar qualities of the Ganges and the Jumna waters, it is no wonder that the Indian people in general should hold that these rivers are sacred and possessed of mysterious powers. It may be that some day some scientist will be able to explain this mystery, but a mere scientific explanation of it will not be enough to detract from the sacredness of the two rivers,

just as the explanation of the special qualities of a genius does not divest him of his high distinction.

No wonder, then, that to a Hindu the Ganges and the Jumna are not simply rivers, they are his sacred mothers whose very touch purifies not only his body but also his soul. Wherever a devout Hindu may go to take his bath, he does not fail to invoke first the Ganges and the Jumna and feel their presence in the water before he takes a dive in it. If his home is far away from these rivers, it is his ambition to see them some day and bless his being by bathing in their sacred waters. He will also like to carry home some water from them and carefully save it in a bottle so that he may use it for purposes of purification.

To some foreigners it may seem going to the extreme—almost verging on superstition. But those who are apt to go beneath the surface of things and observe the fine spirit with which they are looked upon and the good effect resulting from such a spirit, will certainly be slow to indulge in any rash judgment.

CHAPTER VII

THE CULTURAL GURU OF THE PAST

It is not conservatism, with its unbecoming connotation, to study a people's past and receive inspiration therefrom. For, the present is simply a link in the chain of a people's history which depicts the expression of its soul pushing on its course for ever to realize itself. The people, who talk of the present and the future without regard to the past, are those who have usurped their present position with false credentials and are anxious to abuse biological induction by attempting to break away from their low pedigree. There is so little inspiration in tracing descent from the Goths and the Vandals, the Vikings and the Buccaneers, that it is clever to assume the new epithet of the progressive without talking of anything from which progress is achieved as a historical sequence, and then most unceremoniously if not impudently make

a self-appraisement of superiority. The whole thing is a rollicking mess deceptive in all its dazzling appearance. A subject people, however, can hardly allow itself to be swayed by that delusive formula of progress and to run its present course of life separated from its real past. It is like a plant cut off from its roots but given plenty of showers by the gardener; its greenness may retain itself from artificial moisture, but when the source of life is gone, it is only a matter of time to see it totally rotten.

Can the people of India build up a healthy present or dream of a golden future without due regard to their past? What inspiration can a subject people have to build its destiny anew when its existing political status is an implicit surrender of national self-confidence and a homage to an alien race? It is the moral imperative of a subject people to keep its brighter past always connected with its gloomy present (for the present of a subject people is always gloomier than when it was not a subject people), so that the sun of its national being can keep the present vitalized

from within and slowly dissolve away the gathering clouds from its own horizon to anticipate a real summer of joy and productivity. There is no greater religion to a subject people than to save its own ideal, its national soul; for otherwise it lapses into a degrading idolatry by consciously or unconsciously worshipping the alien rulers.

India's past was so full of glory and greatness that it once made her appear like the paradise on earth, a dreamland of the whole mankind. Her splendour, whether material, moral or spiritual, was simply staggering to human imagination. Her material products were so fine and unrivalled that all ancient nations eagerly sought to have trade relations with her. It is said that even ancient Egypt and Chaldea "were commercially its vassals and dependents." The people of these countries saw the Indians well-versed in practical science and art and highly skilled in manufacturing work. Winwood Reade, the famous author of *The Martyrdom of Man*, says, "India offered for sale articles not elsewhere to be found; the shining warts of the oyster; glass-

like stones dug up out of the bowels of the earth, or gathered in the beds of dried-up brooks ; linen which was plucked as a blossom from a tree, and manufactured into cloth as white as snow; transparent fabrics, webs of woven wind which, when laid on the dewy grass, melted from the eyes; above all, those glistening glossy threads stolen from the body of the caterpillar, beautiful as the wings of the moth into which that caterpillar is afterwards transformed."

The expert navigators of Guzerat took these things to Chaldea and Egypt where they found good market for all of them. At a much later period the Phœnicians carried many varieties of Indian goods to the people of Europe, "those acorn-eating savages," whose ambition grew up as they saw such wonderful things, and heard even more wonderful stories about India. The Persians and the Arabs followed the Phœnicians to make themselves rich by selling Indian goods to the Europeans. Large and prosperous cities arose on the routes through which such goods were carried and perished when the routes were changed.

India's trade spread in the same prosperous manner throughout the Eastern countries including the various large islands that form the fringe of Asia. The rich commercial commodities of India thus reached all countries to her right and left, far and near, making the people everywhere wonder about the prosperity of this land.

Later yet, the merchants of Venice and Genoa became fabulously rich by monopolizing the Indian trade in Europe. When this became known to other people of Southern Europe, they too were fired with great ambition to establish their own trade relation with India. Columbus was sent out to discover a sea route. He sailed westward and reached the coast of a new land which, however, he thought was India and the people of which he and his fellowmen called the Indians. The Portuguese people sent Vasco da Gama who succeeded in discovering a sea route to India by way of the South African coast and returned triumphantly after thirty-two months with a letter from a Hindu King—a letter which was written on a golden leaf, welcoming the stranger. It was a

great occasion for the Portuguese people. "That night," says Reade, "all the houses of Lisbon were illuminated; the gutters ran with wine; the skies for miles round were reddened with the light of bonfires."

There were certainly good reasons for such jubilation. It was they who finally succeeded, before any other people of Europe, in discovering a sea route to such a wonderful land and in acquiring the good-will of an Indian king. And what did they not see there to explain the reason as to why that land was so prosperous! They saw no less than what an American scholar recently described as things which the British people saw when they first arrived in India. "Nearly every kind of manufacture," says he, "or product known to the civilized world—nearly every kind of creation of man's brain and hand, existing anywhere, and prized either for its utility or beauty—had long, long been produced in India. India was a far greater industrial and manufacturing nation than any in Europe or than any other in Asia. Her textile goods—the fine products of her looms, in cotton, wool, linen and silk—were

famous over the civilized world ; so were her exquisite jewelry and her precious stones cut in every lovely form ; so were her pottery, porcelains, ceramics of every kind, quality, colour and beautiful shape ; so were her fine works in metal—iron, steel, silver, and gold. She had great architecture—equal in beauty to any in the world. She had great engineering works. She had great merchants, great businessmen, great bankers and financiers. Not only was she the greatest ship-building nation, but she had great commerce and trade by land and sea which extended to all known civilized countries."

The Portuguese discovery of a new sea route brought them the golden opportunity to open direct trade relations with India. It thus occasioned the ruin of Venice, the fall of many great cities on the Tigris, the Euphrates, and the Nile, and at the same time the rapid and pompous rise of Lisbon as the great European market-place of finished Indian goods. The increasing importance of the Portuguese people in wealth and power, through their trade relations with India, became a great temptation for the other European peoples.

The Spaniards, of course, went to their newly discovered America, but amidst all their adventurous undertakings there they could not forget India. A big party of explorers, headed by Ferdinand Magellan, left the American shores to discover a Pacific route to India. They arrived at a group of islands which they later called the Philippines but which they thought was a part of India and the natives of which they chose to call *Indios* or Indians. It seems the very name of India was such an obsession with them that wherever they arrived in course of their search for that blessed land, they liked it to be no other country than India and comforted themselves by calling its inhabitants Indians. Other European peoples, like the Dutch, the English, and the French, tried to follow the example of the Portuguese and the Spaniards. They all undertook perilous voyages over the mighty seas, with the hope that some day they too would be able to reach India and make themselves rich by acquiring her prosperous trade. They arrived one after another and were received with generous hospitality. As they saw golden

opportunities lying before them, they all got busy, each people using every method it could think of to get the lion's share. Naturally, there ensued among these peoples hard rivalry and clash of interests. In that clash finally flashed the good fortune of the Englishmen, who proved more clever than others, rose above all of them and took, with a stately mien, the lion's share of India's trade. How that lion's share was soon developed into the full possession of India is a sad story, of which none can be rightly and honestly proud. But it is a fact that it has served England splendidly to let it rise from its extreme insignificance in every respect to a state of unrivalled power and prosperity. India has made what England is to-day and it is nothing but false pride that stands in the way of recognizing this truth.

There was, however, one peculiar fact in all the eagerness of the Western people to reach and contact India. They wanted a share of her vast material wealth and when they saw plenty of easy opportunities, they developed an intense greed for more and more of that wealth—a greed which blinded them

so much that they could not see India's immeasurable cultural wealth beside and profit themselves by having a share of it. Had they done it while they sought her trade, they would have enriched themselves in a far better way to the glory of both India and their own countries. Her culture would have enabled them to understand that although she had abundance of material wealth, she considered her spiritual wealth yet more worth-while than all of it and that the proper meaning of the former, in a civilized state of life, could not be understood unless it was considered in connection with the latter. Her material wealth would have gone to them as a fine wholesome gift and not as a ruthless extortion. She would not have been reduced to an awfully miserable state by her ingrate beneficiaries.

It cannot be said that India ever tried to withhold her cultural wealth from any people. For, it was she who realised, before all others, that a true culture would enrich itself more and more when shared by more and more people and that the giver of it would lose nothing but might gain as much as,

if not more than, the receiver. She never denied her culture to any one who really wanted it. Ancient Persia, Greece, and Rome received abundantly from her culture and civilization. The people of these countries sought direct cultural contact with her. Greece, though situated at a distance farthest of all, was no less eager to send her scholars there. Voltaire, that great leader of the Enlightenment, said, "The Greeks before the time of Pythagoras travelled into India for instruction." And we are told that even Pythagoras and many post-Pythagorean scholars of Greece including Plato came to India to receive instruction in philosophy. Many renowned scholars of Europe admit that India exerted great influence upon the entire Greecian world of thought. We can see why it is said that Indian thought highly influenced the Neo-Platonists and the Gnostics. We can see why there are also well-known scholars, like Leon de Rosney, Ludwig Buchner, Emile Burnouf, Arthur Lillie, who sincerely believe that early Christianity owed its origin to India. Had that Christianity not been overtaken and

absorbed by the people of the Crusaders' type, it would not have assumed its present aggressive form so repugnant to the Indian spirit of culture. The science and industries of India were no less in demand than her literature and philosophy. The Persians and later the Arabs studied her various sciences, especially mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, and medicine, and having learnt these for their own countries they sought also to spread their knowledge to farther West. And were there not also India's contributions in the well-developed system of agriculture and industry which the noble Arabs carried with them to civilize the West?

When this West came to know, through the Arabs, of that incomparable India, her immense wealth and prosperity, and all other material splendour of her civilization, it stopped its usual home occupations, such as, fighting, plundering, pirating, etc., and turned its curious attention to India. Unlike before, it thought of sending to India not scholars like Pythagoras and Plato, not gentlemen to study and understand her civilization, but

only "adventurers" to get India's material wealth. We have already seen that these Western "adventurers" came at first from the south and then from the north of Europe. When we read about the true nature of these "adventurers," be they at home or abroad, we can realize why India failed to interest them in her spiritual wealth. Winwood Reade gives us a clear picture of the Portuguese "adventurers" whom we may take as the southern type, "But from first to last they were murderers and robbers, without foresight, without compassion. Our eyes are at first blinded to their vices by the glory of their deeds; but as the light fades, their nakedness and horror are revealed. We read of the Arabs who had received safe conducts, who made no resistance, being sewed up in sails and cast into the sea, or being tortured in body and mind by hot bacon being dropped upon their flesh; of crocodiles being fed with live captives for the amusement of the soldiers, and being so well accustomed to be fed that whenever a whistle was given, they raised their heads

above the water. We read of the wretched natives taking refuge with the tiger of the jungle and the panther of the hills; of mothers being forced to pound their children to death in the rice mortars and of their children being danced on the point of spears, which it was said was teaching the young cocks to crow. . . . It was remarked that humanity and justice were virtues which were always left behind at the Cape of Good Hope by passengers for India." One may add that it is very doubtful if they regarded humanity and justice as virtues even in their own countries.

A famous French historian named Hippolyte Adolphe Taine gives us a picture of the nature of the northern type. In his *History of English Literature*, which is said to be one of the great classics of the world, he writes, "Picture in this foggy clime amid hoar-frost a kind of wild beasts, fishers and hunters, but specially hunters of men; these are they, Saxons, Angles, Jutes, Frisians; later on, Danes, who, during the fifth and the ninth centuries, with their swords and battle-

axes, took and kept the island of Britain. . . . Huge white bodies, cold-blooded, with fierce blue eyes, reddish flaxen hair; ravenous stomachs, filled with meat and cheese, heated by strong drinks; of a cold temperament, slow to love, home stayers, prone to brutal drunkenness; these are to these days the features which descent and climate preserve in the race, and these are what the Roman historian discovered in their former country. . . . Pirates at first: of all kinds of hunting the man-hunt is most profitable and most noble; they left the care of the land and flocks to the women and slaves; sea-faring, war, and pillage was their whole idea of a freeman's work. They dashed to sea in their two-sailed barks, landed anywhere, killed everything; and having sacrificed in honour of their gods the tithe of their prisoners, and leaving behind them the red light of their burnings, went further on to begin again."

M. Taine wrote the above in 1864 and he believed that descent and climate still preserved such features in the north-European

type. India saw the "adventurers" from both the south and the north of Europe long before that time. Could such kind of "adventurers" be expected to see in India anything more attractive and worth-while than her material wealth and splendour, and to do anything better there than repeating their usual home occupations? Could they be expected to feel interested in the cultural achievements of India? That would be expecting something foreign to their taste and probably beyond their capacity. Yet, they were the only people through whom the West began to have contact with India, since the historic discovery of Vasco da Gama. Alas for India, whose cultural spirit had to shrink under the ruthless pressure of these "adventurers," while the West began to know her only as a fair land for its greed and adventure, for hunting and hoarding! The cultural meaning of India remained lost to the West, until the recent time when the world circumstances have somehow affected its usual cocksureness and opened its hitherto closed mind to things more permanent and worth-

while than mere pelf and power. Such a happy sign of disillusionment naturally makes India attractive again, though this time in her other sense. If the West becomes as actively interested in India's cultural wealth as it has been in her material wealth, it will be a sure relief for suffering India and a sound remedy to poise the Western mind. There is every need of a sympathetic study and clear understanding of the cultural spirit of India in order that the West can give proper meaning to the wealth and splendour which it has ruthlessly extorted from her but which it has not been able to use in a manner wholly conducive to itself.

This period of Indian history—the period beginning with the coming of the Portuguese and ending when we do not know—is certainly not an inspiring period for cultural India. She has never been happy by being known only by her material splendour. She, of course, received the Western "adventurers" with a fine and frank spirit, offering every kind of help and hospitality well becoming her cultured life, but she was

remember her past cultural gifts with a sincere feeling of respect and gratitude. One of these countries having got its own great civilization, perhaps no less old than that of India, had naturally all the capacity and preparation to understand the latter. When it found something in India's culture which could be introduced profitably into its own great system, it sent its scholars to invite the scholars of India and acquire from them whatever she needed. The other countries followed the same path. The people of these countries received many things from the Indian culture even through their trade relations, for they had already attained a stage of civilized life to understand and appreciate the higher values of the Indian culture. They took many things from it and if they still try to hold these in their social and cultural lives, they do it with the same old feeling of respect and gratitude. India's present misfortune has not caused any fundamental change in their attitude toward her.

The great significant fact of India's relation with these countries of the East is that it has always been a healthy relation in which there

is no sense of humiliation, no racial or cultural arrogance. India can be rightly proud of it, having never deviated from her cultural spirit in all such relations. What do we see in her ancient relation with China, Japan, Korea, Java, Cambodia, and the Philippines ? She did not thrust herself upon any of them, but they imbibed her culture and civilization of their own accord with a view to improving upon their own. The Indian culture did not have them, but they had it. What a good contrast it makes with the so-called modern civilization which seeks to impose itself upon others, whether they like it or not.

The peculiarity of the Indian culture lies in this that it bodes no danger to any. Its own being is an evolutionary process and not an imposition. When the ancient Greeks, by virtue of their supreme political power, tried to impose their civilization upon India, there was the inevitable result—the total expulsion of the Greek civilization from the land. The Scythians, the Huns, the Tartars could not impose but, on the other hand, were slowly drawn into the all-absorbing heart of the great Aryan

civilization. The Mohammedans tried to impose, but have they succeeded ? For nine centuries they ruled over India, destroyed many precious things and converted many Hindus, but have they been able to destroy the spirit ? We are sure they have not. On the contrary, although they came to India sword in hand, these centuries of contact with the Hindus have greatly changed their mind. They have given up the sword for the pen and the plough.

Take again India's relation with China and Japan. Indian culture spread along with Buddhism not to destroy Taoism or Confucianism in China or Shintoism in Japan but to enrich them, not to create friction but to lend its co-operation wherever it is desired in the interest of higher culture. That is why in China, Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism flourish side by side and the same Chinese may at the same time pay equal respect to all. That is why almost all the Japanese are Shintoists and yet they find no difficulty in professing Buddhism. Culture means it, not to impose but to socialize and permeate. It gives whenever it is desired but does not lend.

India by giving her culture to others has not robbed them of anything ; her relation with them is a fellowship of cultures.)

This is why in India even to-day one can find so many aboriginal tribes living their crude primitive lives beside the cultural Hindus. India could have easily absorbed or exterminated them long ago. It would have been very easy during the rule of a Hindu emperor like Chandragupta or Asoka. The great forces of her culture could have easily swept away all forms of primitive life ; but that would be culture contradicting itself. Indian culture, true to its name, has been existing peacefully amidst all forms of life for more than forty centuries, believing that it is anything but moral to force itself upon those who choose to love their own and as such remain different. Truth shines in its own glory. If there is any greater value in Indian culture, all will be attracted to it and spontaneously acquire it for themselves. There is no humiliation in such process and, therefore, no immorality.

India's cultural relation with all the Eastern countries was based upon this moral principle.

Even with the smaller islands in her east she sought simply her trade relations. The Indian traders sailed away with their goods and when they arrived in these islands they found themselves and their goods well received. Some of these merchants chose to settle among the natives and along with the various sorts of their merchandise came invariably their culture and civilization. No feeling of superiority, no desire to impose, no sense of humiliation stained the good relationship between the natives and the Indian settlers. The latter lived on the coast lines, followed their own ways of life, but with no aggressive or unsocial attitude towards the natives. Indian culture came to such lands as a natural flow brought on through commercial intercourse between them. It was the case of a slow cultural infiltration being inevitable from contact with a people firmly rooted in a long established civilization. It had to be slow, because the people of these lands took time to understand the things and ideas of the Indian civilization and to choose from them whatever was deemed as acceptable. The process was

highly moral, for it established no anomalous relation between the natives of the land and the colonists. This is evident from the fact that the Indian settlers have been absorbed by the native population, while their culture has shone over them all. Had not India fallen a victim to the greed of unrefined foreigners, her culture would have attained a climax of which man has not yet been able to dream, and all the surrounding countries that were drawn to her in a bond of genuine fellowship would have shown that the relationship among races and countries might bear a lofty meaning equally conducive to all.

CHAPTER VIII

POSITION OF OUR WOMEN

Of all the mistaken generalizations that are passing for truths regarding the Indian civilization, the one about the Indian women is probably the most unfortunate. It is based upon subtle and slanderous misrepresentations in which they are made to appear as helpless victims of men. Some critics are so vulgar in their expressions that they do not seem to have the least regard even for ordinary decency and good taste. The Indian woman is pictured as one living a very low life, for which the man is said to be wholly responsible. She is generally described as a mere chattel to the man of India. Besides the usual sense of self-gratification in such misrepresentation there may sometimes be also a bit of sympathy, some sort of crocodile tears, exhibited in it for the sake of the "poor miserable creature" called the Indian woman.

Numerous pages may be filled with quotations from the writings of many Western authors on the plight of our women. But surely it will be enough for our present purpose to mention a typical one. I am quoting here a French author, Robert Chauvelot, for whom we have our sympathy on account of his failure to have any experience of the typical Hindu family life which would have enabled him to correct his old acquired view about our women, although he failed because he came to India only to see and appreciate his "Parisian Prince" of Kapurthala and other Frenchified Indians. Thus he writes in his *Mysterious India*, "No betrothed girl, no wife, no widow in the universe leads a life so painful, so rigorous, so closely shut in. I have travelled all over Europe and the Northern countries, I have seen the distress of the women among the nomad peoples of the extreme north, I have also had an opportunity to observe the physical imprisonment and moral disenchantment of the Orientals in the land of the Crescent, their effacement in the Celestial Empire, their puerility in the Land of

the Rising Sun ; later, in Oceaniea or during long months of exploration, I have sailed around islands and archipelagoes and seen to what a state of inferiority the Papua women of New Guinea and the Maori women of New Zealand had fallen, those Maoris who yet rival our own Tahitian women in charm. Well! I must confess that not in the polar regions, not in the harems of Algeria, Tunis, Turkey, Egypt or Arabia, not in the Far East, not in Australia, nor in Polynesia, not even among the Red-skins of America have I witnessed a downfall of the feminine sex so irremediable, so heart-rending as in the women's quarters among the Brahmans." While we may recognize Monsieur Chauvelot's zeal for social explorations in his "universe" and his ability to write with a glaring touch of dramatic imagery, we can reasonably doubt if his findings about the position of the Hindu women have more than a mere sensational value. Whether or not he was ever admitted to any "women's quarters among the Brahmans," he has at least shown his sympathy for those women. There is ap-

parently some humanitarian spirit in this peculiar sympathy, but in reality it contains more poison than even the frank slanders that insult both the men and the women of India. At another page the gentleman writes again, " I have not deliberately blackened a picture already sombre ; but it is incontestable—and I believe uncontested—that of all married women, even the " disenchanted " Mohammedans, the Hindu is the most wretched and degraded." We shall see how much the " uncontested " and " incontestable " statement of this French sensationalist can stand the reality of things.

It is, of course, easy to understand that almost all the critics, who delight in the slanderous misrepresentation of the Indian women, come from the West. They mean to convey by their act, if they do not openly say it, that in their country women are highly respected by men. In accounting for this assumed difference between India and the West, they declare authoritatively that it is mainly due to the difference in the religious and cultural traditions of the two peoples.

The West has learnt, it is said, to give a very high position to women from Christianity and from its cultural tradition as inherited from the Greek and Roman civilizations. In contrast to this it is assumed that India has failed to give such a high social position, because it does not have the approval of her religious and cultural tradition.

Generally it is held in the West that all the Oriental women are in a very inferior social position in their relation to men. One can find this assumption frequently used as a fact in all Western literature. The Western critics have formed this broad and bold assumption perhaps upon their peculiar views about one or two Oriental countries in order to include all others as well. Otherwise, if they have failed to understand the facts about India, they should not have similarly failed in some other Oriental countries where the women are openly active side by side with men, and especially in certain Malayan countries where women hold legally and traditionally even a higher position than men. At any rate, it is very convenient indeed to

classify together all the different Oriental peoples, since it enables one to make deductions without much exertion of one's brains.

Let us now try to understand, first, the social position of the Western women. We should know what position they have been allowed by their cultural tradition and religion. History does not show that in the glorious Greek civilization women held any very exalted social position. On the contrary, it shows, as G. Lowes Dickinson has said, that the Greek woman "in the historic age was conceived to be so inferior to man that he had recognized in her no other end than to minister to his pleasures and to become the mother of his children." Similarly, Lecky says in his *History of European Morals*, "In general the position of the virtuous Greek women was a very low one. She was under a perpetual tutelage: first of all to her parents, who disposed of her hand, then to her husband, and in her days of widowhood to her sons. . . . Marriage was regarded chiefly in a civic light, as the means of producing citizens, and in Sparta it was ordered that old or infirm

husbands should cede their young wives to stronger men, who could produce vigorous soldiers for the state.'' The Roman conception did not differ in any important sense. The terms that the Romans used in describing women were rather undignified, even sensual, conveying some sort of warning against feminine temptations. The Greek hetæras and the Latin salonieres were no better than public women. If they had fewer restrictions and could go out and mix freely with men, it was because by that means the latter could get them to minister to their pleasures more easily and less dearly. But neither the Greeks nor the Romans would choose to give them the position of their family women who could never have the freedom of the public women and thus represented the actual womanhood of ancient Greece and Rome. The attitude of Christianity toward women seems rather unfortunate. According to the Old Testament God said unto the woman, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he

shall rule over thee." The way Christ treated his own mother did not seem to show that woman in his conception deserved any respectful consideration. Again it is said in the Bible, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." St. Paul was very clear in his Roman-like commanding tone when he said, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto the Lord." For, as he said again, "The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man." The part which women were allowed to play in the early Christian Church was limited only to passive acceptance of the religious rites and creeds. The Can Law considered woman as a sort of sub-human creature who caused the fall of man. She was the "weaker vessel," "sack cf dung," "temple above, sewer below" to early Church Fathers who thought it right to "turn away from the sight of woman." Lecky says that in the writings of the Fathers "woman was represented as the door of hell, as the

mother of all human ills. She should be ashamed at the very thought that she is a woman. She should live in continual penance, on account of the curses she has brought upon the world." According to St. Chrysostom woman is a "wicked work of nature covered with shining varnish." And Martin Luther could not think of woman any better than as mere child-manufacturing machine. "Let women," said he, "bear children till they die of it, that is what they are for."

Such cultural and religious traditions do not seem to look at woman with any complimentary attitude. It is hard to see how from such traditions the people of Europe could be expected to draw inspirations for any respectful treatment of women. It was said by the French historian Taine that at the time of the Norman conquest it was the custom in some part of England to buy women and "to carry them to Ireland for sale in order to make money. The buyers usually made the young women pregnant and took them to market in that condition in order to ensure a better

price." More recently, George A. Dorsey says in his *Story of Civilization*, "English law at the time of Blackstone practically denied woman's existence as a personality after marriage. She had almost no rights at all. From the time of Norman conquest until fairly recently, the English wife was her husband's liege subject. If she killed him she was punished, not for murder, but for petty treason—revolt against her sovereign. Her only redress for his maltreatment was a church court."

Until the coming of the industrial revolution women in the West had their social position somewhat nearer to the slaves. If the industrial revolution brought them some relief from the tyranny of men, it was more or less incidental. The sudden impetus upon the various industrial developments called for the co-operation of women in factories and elsewhere. Their habitual patience and thorough minuteness were highly useful in maintaining the quality of mass productions. By throwing open to women many employments in industrial offices and factories, men

found a fine economic value in them. With an eagle's eye upon the glowing economic prospects from allowing such change in the life of woman, the man in the West naturally began to regard her in a somewhat different manner; while, on the other hand, the Western woman found in this new opportunity an economic freedom which enabled her, for the first time in European history, to feel the worth of her own individuality. Having some taste of freedom in the economic aspect of life, she got the courage to stand against man's injustice to her in other aspects as well. Since then she has sought to organize persons of her own sex to make men recognize women as their equals. If in many organized movements the Western women are found to be rebellious, even most militant, it is just an inevitable reaction from the old unwholesome relation which existed between them and their men. The men of the West could not but concede many rights to their women who have become now sufficiently conscious of their economic power with which the former have to reckon in order to avoid any possible set-

back in the present industrial and economic conditions.

Undoubtedly it is true that the social position of the Western women has greatly improved from what it had been in the past. But this improvement seems to have been carried on not so much in the moral aspect of their social relation as in its economic and political aspects. Most of the feminine movements in the West have only political significance. These are aimed at securing or asserting some rights. Western women feel gratified when they are recognized as equal to men. It is perhaps due to the forced inferiority of the past and its attendant exploitation. It reveals a political spirit in their relation with men. As a result of this spirit, the social relationship between the two sexes in the West has become contractual and very formal. In this form of relationship there is certainly a clear recognition of sex individuality. As such recognition slowly leads to their social equality, the men and the women of the West compliment each other for what they consider to be the highest social progress they have achieved.

From this social evolution in the West let us now turn to India and see what position in society she gives to her women.

If we take the Vedic period as the beginning of the cultural tradition of India we find that women at that time held a very honourable position in society. "In no nation of antiquity," says H. H. Wilson, "were women held in so much esteem." They took equal part in the exercise of religion. The Veda which is the Bible of the Hindus is not the product of men alone. There are many verses in it which were composed by women. These women were called *Brahmavadinis* or revealers of truth about God. They were quite free to discuss religion and give religious instructions to the people.

The relation between the husband and the wife was given a spiritual meaning. The great sage Yajnavalkya said, "A husband is loved, not because you love the husband but because you love in him the Divine Spirit or *Absolute Atman*. A wife is loved, not because we love the wife, but because we love in her the Divine Spirit."

Many women of this period were good fighters. The Rig Veda tells us interesting stories of their heroism in their encounters with men.

During the Epic period the spiritual power was separated from the temporal power. The Vedic sacrifices became the work of men alone. But the women had their own ways of satisfying their spiritual aspirations. Principal George Howells of the Serampore College believes that the women of India during the age of the Mahabharata were more fortunate than even the modern women. Thus he says in his *The Soul of India*, "Woman still retains her freedom, and, in disposal of her own person and fortune, is on an equality with man to a degree beyond even the wildest dreams of the modern suffragette." Referring to the character of Sita, as depicted in the Ramayana, and that of Damayanti in the Mahabharata, M. le baron Guerrier de Dumast says in his *Fleurs de l'Inde*, "Neither designed—neither dreamt of even by the Greeks or by the Romans, who had never risen to such heights; neither suspected, we say, by

Homer or even by Virgil; feminine types of such elevation, such delicacy, such purity of sentiment could not have been conceived any more by the great Sanskrit epic writers if these had not met on the banks of the Ganges, what did not exist either by the shores of the Meles or of the Tiber ; if these had not found in the Hindu society of their time the necessary lineaments and colours to compose and describe similar figures. To believe the contrary is to stupidly forget that man does not possess the powers of the Supreme Author and that he could not like the Creator make something out of nothing."

They certainly were the living characters in Epic India. Would such ideal characters be possible in a society, or even could the poets think of describing them in a most respectful and elegant manner, unless the women of that time had the necessary rights and privileges to mount to high distinctions deserving such tribute?

When a system of Hindu pantheon came to be in vogue in the religion of India, the supreme positions assumed by the various

goddesses could not receive any recognition from men unless their attitude toward women had been one of high respect and reverence. Nor could such goddesses be worshipped so universally even to-day unless the attitude has been continued to persist in the social order of India. The great goddess Kali or Shakti represents Cosmic Energy or Primal Force. Laksmi is the goddess of fortune and Saraswati of wisdom. Now, force or power, fortune, and wisdom are undoubtedly the three highest values in human life. That these values are represented by goddesses is itself a very significant fact which makes women deserve a higher compliment than men. Such religious belief could not be popular among men, unless they think that women do have the capacity as well as the right to mount to similar positions in society.

The only person who stands prominent in Indian history for his work to restrict the freedom of women was the great law-giver Manu. He ushered in a period of Brahmanical supremacy and set laws for the whole Hindu society. He thus became recognized as the

greatest authority on the Hindu social polity. It is hard to say why he sought to restrict woman's freedom in society. Perhaps he was actuated by a high motive of greater social order and purity. Women were, for the first time, debarred from reading the Vedas or performing religious worships. He made certain laws according to which women should be always dependent upon men. By this he meant that the woman should be taken care of by the man in every stage of her life. He was so very careful to maintain the respectful attitude towards women that he may be excused for the apparent harshness indicated by his restrictive laws. "Where women are honoured," says he, "there the gods are pleased; but when they are not honoured, all religious acts are fruitless. Where female relations live in grief, the family soon wholly perishes; but that family always prospers in which they are happy." He strictly enjoins every husband "not to strike even with a flower a wife guilty of a hundred faults." And the mother!—"She is more to be revered than a thousand fathers." Indeed, to a Hindu

there can be no more inspiring and elevating a relation than the mother. One of the most sacred and common proverbs in India says, "Mother and motherland are greater than heaven itself."

With the rise of Buddhism the restrictions were withdrawn and women became again as free as in the Vedic age. They were equally educated and free in their religious observances.

But the standard of sex morality, during this period, seemed slowly to fall from its former elevation. The revival of the Brahmanism of Manu caused the general tendency to connect that moral weakening with the absence of social restrictions in the relation between men and women. So the restrictive laws were again introduced to define the women's field of activity. But those laws never actually affected the right of women to high distinction, especially in the field of culture and education. "Women were initiated," says Clarisse Bader, in her *The Women in Ancient India,* "into letters and art. To their talents as painters was entrusted

the decoration of palaces, for those festivals which were, again, enlivened by their songs, their dances and the notes of their lutes. It was to a woman that Kalidasa, in dedicating to her his treatise on prosody, the Sruta Bodha, taught the precepts of the divine art of which he was the master." Many female scholars, like Khana and Lilavati, ascended to the highest level of greatness. The astronomy of the former is still being studied with profit by scholars. When Sankaracharyya, the great commentator of Vedanta, had a debate with Mandana Misra, it was the latter's wife, Bharati, who acted as arbitress in it. The dramatic art was much developed at this time through the active co-oporation of women. "The Indian theatre," says Wilson, "was the only one in antiquity which allowed young girls of high birth to take part in the sketches of social life."

When the Mohammedans invaded India, the Hindu women showed equal heroism with their men in offering resistance to the aggressors. Against the huge army of each Mohammedan invader there was hardly suffi-

cient Hindu military strength for a long successful resistance. Still the Hindu women inspired their men to fight till death. The valiant Chand Bibi was India's Joan of Arc. She defended the fort of Ahmednagar against the mighty attack of Akbar. On many occasions there were thousands of women who thoroughly armed themselves and marched on to the battle-field to take the place of their fallen men. They fought and killed as many as they could and then they died. Others who could not join them for some physical disability or other, gathered together and, with just patriotic pride, sang the songs of their country's glory before consigning themselves to fire. With all the reverses suffered by the Hindus in the successive Mohammedan invasions, the unparalleled spirit of sacrifice and chivalry, as shown by the Hindu women, makes a glorious tradition which alone will render any criticism of woman's honourable position in Hindu society absurdly irrelevant.

But the defeat of the Hindus in the hands of the invading Mohammedans and the final establishment of the Mohammedan rule in

21—(1164B)

India necessarily called for some social re-adjustment, for the maintenance of the Hindu social aud cultural integrity. The successive invasions of the new rulers had already caused an indescribable havoc on the Hindu civilization. The best Hindu minds had, therefore, to seriously engage themselves in the supreme task of saving their civilization from utter destruction. It was quite natural that the new ruling people would have the intoxication of their recent victory, which gave them enough prestige and power over the conquered. Fully conscious of this some of them began to live in India not without causing a serious problem in the matter of protecting the honour of Hindu women. They lived in such a way that a famous Mohammedan writer, Abul Fazl, had to admit that "they were sometimes debauched to a degree." The Hindus, with the political powers lost, realized their helplessness in this matter. But something must be done to save the honour of their womanhood and thus maintain the purity of their social order. They found some remedy in the social custom of

the Mohammedans—the Purdah system—which they felt compelled to adopt in their own society in such places where the Mohammedan power prevailed. So the Hindu women, especially of the higher castes, took to the seclusion of the inner apartments and thus helped the Hindu society to solve one of its great social problems caused by the Mohammedan occupation of the land. The Hindu women could not but accept that fate, when they saw that their men had other great problems to grapple with. "Mohammedanism is largely responsible," says Principal Howells, "for the low position that woman occupies at present time in India. The zenana system, so universal among the upper classes of Hindu society in Northern India, is a direct product of the example and rapacity of the Mohammedan conquerors."

We are not sure if the seclusion of the Hindu women gave them a low social position. It was an arrangement, a division of occupations, as warranted by the pressing exigencies of the time. This arrangement was introduced only in those places where the Mohammedan

rule was established and the Mohammedan population predominated. In South India and in several other places where the Mohammedans could not establish their power, the Hindus found no need of introducing this Purdah system. Whether behind the Purdah or without it the Hindu women continued to hold the same honourable position in the attitude of their men. It was not a low position, but a safe position, which the Purdah system gave them under the existing conditions.

Scarcely had the Hindus thus solved some of their social and cultural problems caused by the coming of the Mohammedans when the British "adventurers" arrived in India and got busy to establish their power over the land. A new period began with fresh problems of every kind and dimension for the unfortunate Hindus. They, of course, did their part along with the Mohammedans to resist British aggression. In this resistance the Hindu women, wherever possible, had also their share of heroic sacrifices. We cannot refrain from mentioning at least one of them, the great Rani of Jhansi, who took

the position of a general and successfully resisted a portion of the British army. But the inevitable followed, valour had to yield finally to the diplomatic craft of the West.

When Lord Bentinck came to the Punjab to meet Rana Ranjit Singh, he was surprised to see a regiment of seventy strong women parading before him, " dressed in yellow silk and marshalled by a female commandant armed with a long cane."

Thus we see that neither the religion nor the tradition of the Hindus would support any low position of their women. And the women, in their turn, have also never failed to contribute their share in the making of the glorious civilization of India. Their magnificent achievements in every period of Indian history form a glowing testimony to the social position which they held. No women, just as no men, could do great things such as those done by the Hindu women unless they enjoyed a social position high enough to carry with it the necessary rights and privileges.

This historical truth certainly sheds its great influence upon the present Hindus, both

men and women. The men find that their history has been made not by the work of men alone but by that of women also and that too in no unequal share. They feel equally inspired by remembering their male and female ancestors and show equal respect to them. The effect of such reading of history has its fine salutary bearing upon their social attitudes which take the right of woman to high social position as a matter of course. The women read Indian history with the same effect upon them. They take their high social position as a natural thing and find no reason to compliment men for it. They do not suffer from any inferiority complex and hence are not interested in making themselves mere men's imitators or competitors.

In our time Indian women have been no less active than men to achieve the welfare of India. They show equal enthusiasm in all progressive movements of the country. The British rulers conceded to the Indians, by the Reform Act of 1919, a small share in the government of India. But it was meant only for men—they alone were given the right to

vote and not the women. This discrimination was clearly as unfair to women as it was un-Indian. So the "men joined with their women to agitate for reform in enfranchisement giving women the same right to vote." Deputations were sent to the British Parliament. As a result, the House of Commons made a clever change to put the Indian mind on trial. "While retaining the sex disqualification in the Reform Bill they framed the electoral rules in such terms that if any Provincial Legislative Council should approve by a resolution in favour of women's franchise, women should be put on electoral register of that Province." The men knew how to acquit themselves in accordance with their traditional spirit. The women got their right to vote. It was some Indian State governed by an orthodox Hindu prince that first granted such right to women. Then the British Indian Provinces and other Indian States followed. This fact is the statement of a British lady, Miss Gadsen, who felt surprised at this. Thus she writes, in the *Indian Year Book of 1934-35*: "Within the abnormally short period of eleven years the

Woman Suffrage Movement has risen in India, swept through the country and achieved the political enfranchisement of women in all the nine British Provinces and in four Indian States." It was a movement to move the British authorities and not the men of India, certainly not the Hindus. There was no organized noise, no display of window-breaking against the male Hindus who felt equally with the women for their just cause. When the men of India got the power to decide whether or not their women should have the same right to vote, it became a very simple matter and the women got it without making any violent impression upon the country. Miss Gadsen finds the cause of the success of this movement in the "deep veneration that is given by the Hindu and the Mohammedan religion to the feminine aspect of life equally with the masculine as shown by the importance of the goddesses, by the necessity for the presence of the wife at all ceremonies performed by a Brahman, and by the idea of the sacred mystery of womanhood implied by the purdah."

Owing to very little appropriation of money for public instruction, India still suffers from a scandalously high percentage of illiteracy. It is a sad neglect of India's natural love for knowledge on the part of our rulers and a standing disgrace to her cultural name. With only about ten per cent of literacy in general one can hardly expect much progress of Indian women in the various professional lines. Yet among those women who have been fortunate to have education, one may find now quite a good number of teachers, professors, writers, doctors, lawyers, judges, and magistrates. One lady was able to become the Deputy President of a Legislative Council. There have been many women leaders in the political movement of India. Some of them were actually elected dictators during the Civil Disobedience Movement. More than five thousand women, it is said, went to jail by taking part in this Movement. Even to-day there are young girls of highly respectable families who are passing their days in prison, some of them were sent to the Andaman Islands, being accused of highly seditions acts. Indeed, in the

present political movements the Indian women have been causing to the British rulers no less anxiety and nervousness than their men.

Women are now found as members of Municipal Committees, District Boards, Education Boards, University Committees, etc. In the last Round Table Conference held in London to discuss the political status of India there were Indian ladies on the Indian Committee. In the recent election to the Provincial Legislatures under the Reform Act of 1935, inaugurated on the first of April, 1937, many women stood as rival candidates of men, despite the fact that they had also the provision for separate seats in the Legislature, and actually defeated several men of recognized leadership and high reputation.

Perhaps, it would be better if I quote here a woman leader, Mrs. Singh of Bhagalpore, who received her education at Oxford and travelled extensively in the various parts of the world. Evidently, she has had a long personal experience of the woman's life in the West and can, therefore, express her feeling about the woman's position in India from her own com-

parative knowledge The following quotation is taken from an interview published in a Manila journal about two years ago when she was at Manila on a world tour with her husband. Thus she says: "Really our men in India consider it most natural for their women to share in national life and activities. They have never in any way considered women as rivals as the men do here (at Manila), I understand. To the Hindus women are the complement of men and are, therefore, an indispensable element in any of their undertakings. As a matter of fact, the real impetus that started the woman activities in India was the national movement led by Gandhi. Gandhi's movement brought women out into political work. They were the ones who led in the encouragement of home industries. Once they had known the responsibilities of active citizenship, these women forged on ahead to show that India was a country administered by both men and women. I even think that India is the first country that believes no nation can progress unless its women take a hand in the administration of the government. We have

long had our suffrage; we could vote for our representatives in the national and provincial assemblies; and in the next year, we shall have equal suffrage with men. For in the new Reform Scheme now being considered in the National Assembly, the higher property and educational electoral qualifications for women will be done away with.

"There are more than fifty women organizations in the land, each of them giving their full-hearted support to nationally organized feminine federation. Social conferences wherein art, divorce, and marriage, white slave traffic, woman and child labour problems are discussed, are frequently sponsored by them. They lead in the social and educational reforms that India so badly needs.

"We have now women doctors, lawyers, writers, educators, painters, sculptors, and nurses—there is hardly a professional field uninvaded by the fair sex. We hope that they are just the forerunners of a still better Hindu womanhood—of women whose task it shall be to help in the upliftment of a free India."

I quote Mrs. Singh so extensively, even at the cost of repetition of some things, in order to show that the Indian woman does not fail to recognize man's sincere feeling of respect and sympathy for her.

If sometimes some men are found to behave themselves as higher than their women one can see that it is mainly due to lack of education which keeps them totally ignorant of their ideal of social life. Those who do like that are very few and are generally condemned by their neighbours as family tyrants. But even of them none would dare to show any superiority complex before his mother whose highest social position is unquestionable to every son. To every Hindu, woman as a general concept represents mother, and no mother can ever hold a lower position in Hindu society.

Few Indian women suffer from an obsession of equality complex. They hold a sacred tradition which gives them enough self-respect and self-confidence to do their share in the cultural evolution of India. In all her attempts to improve the conditions of women

let India follow her own lofty ideal and always guard herself against the importation of any exotic principle of sex relationship. She should remember carefully the peculiarly political character of the relationship which is found to exist generally between the men and the women of the West. It is this peculiarity which makes an essential difference between the Western and the Indian social life. The position of Indian women cannot be understood and should not be judged by means of any political criterion. Their relation with men possesses a strictly moral foundation which makes men and women complementary to each other and not as separate social units.

CHAPTER IX

NEW FETISH OF SEX EQUALITY

There is something, so we are told, called the spirit of the age. It is as universal as Miss Universe in our modern beauty contest. Both are supported by statistics and hence unquestionable, for statistics is modern science. Both are equally idealistic, because inspiring to the crowd. But the inspiration is temporal because that is what they mean it to be.

But the spirit of the age is no less man-made than the beauty of Miss Universe. A good many ideas, like the self-conscious beauties, seek universal recognition to become the spirit of the age and their success or failure depends upon the strength of the circumstances, just as the chance of the ordinary beauty or extraordinary ugliness to become Miss Universe depends upon the power and abilities of their recruiting favourites. Somewhere at a particular time, what we call the

spirit of the age is first conceived merely as an idea and then reared into a spirit by favourable circumstances. These being human circumstances are not quite strange to any people on this earth. They exist in a certain degree or other almost everywhere. So the little spirit, as soon as it assumes some power through certain circumstances around it, seeks to push its horizon by means of advertisement which gives it some importance where it has none at all. But that importance goes without recognition everywhere outside, till the advertised spirit succeeds in stirring up or even creating, if necessary, similar circumstances. Psychology of persuasion assures us that a persistent coddling of such circumstances on the part of the spirit may serve the purpose. So it seeks to give undue importance and repeated indulgence to those that were either no circumstances or circumstances visibly insignificant. These, in their turn, become active, with the motive to install the spirit at any cost. If they can become sufficiently impressive, popular feeling slowly begins to take their side, and then it is quite a risk on the part of any

thoughtful individual to voice something different. For, there is the spirit of the age—a frowning freak of the mob.

Sex equality is a modern idea, more modern than the idea of equality. Not that either of them was unknown in olden days, but it has acquired a new importance in our times. The former follows from the latter as a logical deduction. Hence, it has to wait till the idea of equality has somewhat established its authority, like the spirit of an age.

The idea of equality does not so readily interest those people whose conception of human relationships is preponderantly moral rather than political. This is why the people of most of the Oriental countries have been slow to give any importance to this idea in their mutual relationships. Even the exaggerated tyranny of the Indian caste system could not prepare the soil for the origin or for the exuberant growth of the idea. Injustice there has been much in the caste relationships, but it has not been justified by any fundamental principles upon which

the Indian society is built. Where caste is based upon politics as it is in Europe or upon plutocracy as in America, injustice seeks its peremptory justification in the very foundation of society. But all injustice is unjustifiable where caste is based upon the principle of mutual obligation, where no particular section of society can stand alone. This principle has a direct reference to man's sense of mutual appreciation. Where there is mutual appreciation there is no caste humiliation. Inequality without humiliation is meaningless. And the question of equality does not arise where there is no inequality.

But equality, as an inspiring idea, appears in places where the interests of one class are used by another like the limbs of Epictetus, where human relationships are defined by Hobbes and governed by Machiavelli. It becomes the ideal cry in a country where men live by cruel comparison—where inequality is an artificial imposition, a conscious humiliation and a justified oppression. It flourishes in a country where a man's position is determined by his external possessions and not by his

inward virtues. It goads people into action where self-criticism and self-control are unknown and the golden principle is meant exclusively for others. If equality has become almost the spirit of the age, it is because the French Revolution was too local to be an effective argument for the lords-superior in other lands and for the people of one land enforcing 'lordolatry' over the people of another.

Sex equality, as an idea, has acquired its first impetus from the growth of the spirit of equality and has been sustained in the West by the peculiar relationships of the two sexes based upon the principle of rights. Society in the West, being an institution more political than moral, has made human relationships a mere matter of contract. As Western men and women are both human they have been used to applying this principle among the individuals of the same sex as well as between those of the opposite sexes. But here politics seems to have been pushed rather too far. It is conceivable that man in society stands in relation to man upon a contractual basis to

avoid mutual aggression and guarantee mutual security, although it smacks somewhat of a crude life and not a high civilization. But it seems highly improbable that man stands in relation to woman on the same basis. Man and woman do not meet as equals to discuss their rights, they are drawn together by a natural urge, which civilization has sought to refine into a higher sentiment—call it love if you please.

Each sex is incomplete without the other, each needs the other to make up a social unit. Nature has built them complementary. It is not a question of 'if you do that to me, I do this to you'—it is not a question at all, for the two must come together, if or no if. And the two come together not as two individuals, but as two necessary parts of one irresistible whole. If the one cannot help being together with the other, it is futile, if not absurd, on the part of one to talk of equality or inequality to the other. It only aggravates the situation and holds down the natural impulse of man and woman from being refined and sublimated.

Why should there arise any question of equality or inequality of the two sexes when the two are complementary, when the one supplies the inevitable needs of the other? The union of the two is a necessary condition of society. It is, therefore, proper on the part of a healthy society to see that this union is real. But there is no real union where both are self-conscious individuals unwilling to be merged into one.

Real union means self-forgetfulness. This is possible only when one's centre of thought is the other. That one can entirely forget oneself in the other is proved even by the brute union of the two from natural urge however temporary. When this natural urge is sublimated into an enduring love by civilization, the permanent shifting of the centre of thought from one's own self to the other becomes also natural. Then the two think of their respective duties instead of clamouring for their rights. Then there is no time to think of one's own self, for that is drowned in the thoughts of the other. A truly civilized society is based upon the principles of duties

because that is enjoined by love and love alone can truly unite. Society is a mere makeshift where the sense of rights prevails over that of duties, where politics displaces morality.

Enough of this idealism, one may say, rather come to the world of facts and see what is happening there. Woman has been always unjustly treated, always oppressed by man. She has been always a victim of man's selfishness. Man has invented religion to call her evil, framed up law and politics to make her more helpless, and fostered a double standard of morality to render her life harder than his. Where the relation between man and woman has been one of the oppressor and the oppressed, it is proper in the name of justice that the latter's rights be recognized and protected.

All these, unfortunately, may be true, though true somewhere and sometimes and not everywhere and always. It is mere exaggeration of circumstances to consider them to be present everywhere and always. Besides, examples of woman being oppressive to man are also not very rare. It

is man's sympathy for the physically weaker sex that causes him to keep silent over it. There have been lapses on both sides, probably with man's side much heavier. This is because man is physically stronger. He takes advantage of it when love has not yet chastened his crude feeling and checked his crass desires which constantly demand satisfaction. The comparatively harder struggle for existence affords him less opportunity to become soft. Yet he has willingly made his struggle harder by giving shelter to a woman, by making her life his care, his pleasant responsibility. This means that he does not mean oppression if he can help it and if she can help him. Yes, man as man does not mean oppression to woman. Then some other man would not have brought it out to the world, for we know it is man who is first to raise his protest against man's injustice to woman. Had it not been for man, any news about it would have died out where it arose, for it is difficult to think that the oppressed women could ever combine to make the news of their sufferings audible, and even if they could they would

not, for women by nature cannot combine at their own initiative. It is, therefore, not a case of man against woman, but a case of some men against some women, just as it is also a case of some women against some men. The root of the problem, wherever it may arise, lies in the ideal and its application in the society.

The proper solution of the problem cannot be found in legal sanction or political concession. It may make things worse—the rift may be gradually widened till family becomes an impossible institution and along with it the various other social institutions including the very society itself. True society cannot exist on the basis of political principles. The remedy, therefore, has to be solved on a moral plain where the idea of equality or inequality does not seem relevant in the relations between man and woman.

CHAPTER X

THE MEANING OF CASTE AND ITS CONFUSION

India is more a continent than a country. In her bosom dwells a vast population rich in both number and variety. In number her population equals that of whole Europe excluding Russia and in variety it consists of several racial types with many grades of culture and civilization. The Western idea of nationality by geographical limits cannot have any real bearing upon the Indian people. One must be careful when one ventures any generalization on them.

A warning is particularly necessary for those who want to understand the intricate social system of the Hindus. They should know first of all that the Hindu society exists not in the towns and cities of India but in her seven hundred thousand villages. It is in these villages where the people build their permanent homes and maintain their own

social customs and traditions. Few people choose to have their permanent homes in towns and cities. Those who have to work there for their living may have only their temporary residences which, whenever a vacation comes, they leave and return to their village homes. The towns and cities are meant to exist for the villages, although that order has been very much affected by the new circumstances in our country.

The travellers who come to India and gather their knowledge of Hindu social life by visiting some of the modern towns and cities like Bombay, Delhi, Simla, Calcutta, Madras and Pondicherry, not only deceive themselves but mislead those for whom they write books on the basis of their so-called personal experience. They make more mistakes than those foreigners who go to America and base their knowledge of the American people upon their experience of the conditions that prevail in New York, Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco. On the other hand, those who have the curiosity to go into the interior of India and then base their knowledge of the Hindu ways

of living, upon their experience of some aboriginal people who are more or less accessible to foreigners, make the same mistake as those who gather their ideas of American life from their visit in some Red Indian reservations of Oklahoma and Iowa. Yet it is a fact that the Hindus have frequently been pictured in the West to represent the lives of the aboriginal tribes or, at best, of those unfortunate people who have, through a sad mistake of the high caste Hindus, been neglected and denied the fruits of the Indian civilization.

A true picture of Hindu social life is not so easily available even to those foreigners who allege that their personal experience is not confined within the urban areas of India. Owing to their different mode of living they do not find easy access to Hindu community and cannot witness personally the various social rites and ceremonies that make up the programme of Hindu social life. It is only recently that a few Western people, who have somehow become intimately acquainted with some Hindu families, have been able to see closely the social celebrations of the Hindus. But such

experience of the Westerners has been possible only in some big modern towns or cities while the village social life still remains unknown to them.

At all events, it is doubtful if there is anybody among the Western people having some knowledge of India, who would deny having ever heard about the caste system of the Hindus. There is hardly any literature on India which is the product of the Western writers but has devoted a great many pages upon some aspects of the caste system. It is not possible, in our present undertaking, to dilate in details upon this highly intricate social system. We shall try here only to understand the causes that have brought about its present chaotic conditions.

Caste was originally based upon colour or lineage. The proud Aryans were overconscious of their own superiority and wanted to preserve it by preventing any colour mixture through social intermingling. But later they showed greater sanity by recognizing inner qualities as the best criterion of caste division. It was indeed a fine evolutionary change in

caste conception. It implied a widening of social compact to recognize similar classification outside the Aryan fold and admit the non-Aryans into the same social body—a process of the civilized Aryans assimilating the civilized Dravidians. This shows that the caste system was not so rigid in ancient times.

In the Mahabharata, Yudhisthira in reply to king Nahusha said that a person born in a Brahmana family would not necessarily be a Brahmana, or one of a Sudra parentage would not be a Sudra, for Brahmanic virtues could be found in many Sudras and Sudra habits were not absent in many of the twice-born castes. It was also said elsewhere :

Na jati pujyate rajan gunah kalyanakarakah,
Chandalamapi vrittastham tam devah
Brahmanam viduh.

"Lineage is not honoured, but blessed virtues are. If a Chandala or untouchable happens to be virtuous, even the gods would recognize him as a Brahmana." Social stratification was, therefore, a means to recognize and cultivate the higher virtues in men. There

seemed to have been no sense of disparity among the first three castes. Their sense of duties and obligations towards one another kept up a sort of the Platonic ideal of justice which was indeed a safeguard to social harmony. This was certainly a wise device of the early Indian society to encourage efficiency without competition and to foster moral as well as spiritual ambitions without the bane of class prejudice. That the caste narrowness did not poison the ancient society is evident from the fact that there were more incarnations of God in the Kshattriya caste than in the Brahmana. Krishna, Rama, and the Buddha were all Kshattriyas and yet they were and still are regarded as incarnations by all including the Brahmanas.

The social organization attained its rigidity probably as a reaction against the Buddhistic cult of society which was held as mainly responsible for the increasing social confusions and weaknesses in what might be called the Buddhistic period. But the degeneration of the system certainly began after the fourth caste was formed. This caste was

formed out of the aboriginal people to serve the first three castes and was called the Sudra or servant caste. The introduction of this caste marked the beginning of social disparity which was, at first, applied only in the case of the Sudras by the other three castes but later even among themselves.

The Brahmanas who were the chief repositories of Indian culture and philosophy developed this pernicious attitude further against the other castes and began to produce literature to justify this attitude. So the whole social system was slowly drifting away from its principle of mutual obligation to one of exploitation. Even the great law-giver Manu overlooked the old noble principle and openly said :

Patito'pi dwijahpujyo na cha sudro jitendriyah.

"A twice-born (of the first three castes) is honourable even when fallen, but not so a Sudra though he has conquered all his senses." Thus instead of inward virtue being the criterion of social division birth became the sole determining factor. The

discipline and restraint which a higher caste meant needed no more emphasis when birth itself could protect the privileges. This criterion of birth might have some force of social stability, but to make it the sole criterion was to hinder social progress and abuse caste privileges. It was natural that the caste began, since that time, to degenerate. And the process of degeneration seems to have reached its climax at the present time.

But such unfortunate conditions in the Hindu society do not mean much weakness in its relation to the non-Hindu communities. The people of one caste may resent the conduct of those of another, but none of them is ashamed of his own caste. Their protest is against exploitation and undeserving privileges. It does not shake their faith in Hinduism and induce them to seek admission into some non-Hindu community. This is because caste is not the whole of Hinduism, nor can the so-called higher castes claim an absolute right to the latter. But this may not be enough to keep them long in the Hindu fold, if they continue to suffer from mutual

exploitations, especially as they hear the ever-ready invitation of other communities to join them.

There is no use, however, denying the fact that the caste is at present in an extremely chaotic condition due mainly to India's sad economic dislocation. The coming economic order will determine the ultimate fate of the caste. Either it will go or re-organize itself with due consideration to the presence of other communities.

But this does not mean that the caste has been a pernicious system from its very beginning, as shallow persons are often inclined to think. What the caste has done to save the culture and civilization of India cannot be properly estimated at this time, for when people suffer from causes they cannot remedy mutual accusation becomes a habit until they begin to lose faith in and condemn their own things. Some of the Western social philosophers, like August Comte and Herbert Spencer, wrote in high eulogium on the system. If caste is ridiculed by the Western missionaries, it is because it successfully resists

their proselytising work in India. While they zealously criticise the caste system they establish a caste of their own by shutting the Indian converts against free social intercourse with them and, we are told, that there are certain Christian churches in Southern India where these converts do not find it inconsistent to retain their old caste distinctions. Many of our ruling people are also heard to attack it very strongly. There seems to be some special reason for it. Mr. Cotton, who was formerly a very prominent member of the Indian Civil Service, writes, in his *New India*, "The British administrator condemns the institution because he cannot on account of it override the internal discipline of a subject community, and finds himself ranked by them, for all his authority, with the various outcasts." Those of our rulers who criticise it must remember that their exclusive ways of living barring the Indian people from a free social intercourse with them constitute a defence of the caste. The reckless criticism which comes from the Western countries in general has its cause in the power of the caste

to withstand the aggression of an alien civilization. This has been angrily admitted by a Frenchman, the author of *Mysterious India*. Thus he says, " Ah ! these implacable castes, the origin of which is lost in the mist of Ages; they form, indeed, the most impassable barrier against the spread of Occidental civilization."

Perhaps this social system would not have long been so rigid and stereotyped, had the people been in an atmosphere of their own. Caste may have to go for sometimes, but the people should not think that it goes because it is essentially bad. It would mean an insult to the genius of Ancient India whose wonderful organizing capacity must not go unrecognized. Let the people of India think that whatever change is to be made in Indian society it is because the new circumstances demand it. The present state of the Indian situation requires the maintenance of an iron faith in India's past, lest in the process of cleaning the house the gold goes with the dust.

CHAPTER XI

THE STANDARD OF LIVING

A definite plea is in vogue in the modern West for a position of superiority on the ground of a higher standard of living. The Western people are said to have a higher standard of living than the people of Asia and are raising much hue and cry to safeguard their standard from being affected by the presence of other people who, according to them, show a distinct inferiority in their ways of living. The trouble arising out of it is no doubt very unfortunate, but the policy which has been resorted to to avert any conflict between races with different standards may make matters more complicated particularly at a time when racial segregation is fast becoming an impossibility. The humiliation which the Indian people are undergoing in various parts of the world in the hands of the Western people is gathering a kind of reactionary spirit in the former. Yet, only a bit of common

sense, a little idealism, a little humane feeling may save the world from the evil effects of race antagonism.

The prejudice which many of the Occidentals entertain against the Indians has a peculiar growth. Besides the mass of fabricated informations about the social, moral, and religious life of the Indians with which the minds of the Western children are fed during their school days, the strange manners and customs which the Western travellers observe in India and then describe to their own people at home in a somewhat grotesque manner, cater for the Western prejudice and supply materials for their literature of hatred. When they arrive at Bombay or Calcutta or Delhi and find innumerable Indians, young and old, men and women, passing along the streets with bare feet and scanty clothing, they at once verify their early education concerning these people and become well convinced that they are really savage. Even a distinguished professor of a great American University could not see anything of a deeper significance behind this apparent scene of what they consider as

savage life. He went so far, in his book *India in Ferment*, that he dared to depict Mahatma Gandhi, that saintly leader of India, as a semi-savage because he happened to see him go bare-footed and in loin cloth. How could he understand that great soul of India without a little grasp of the secret of Indian life! Gandhi is the concrete representation of the Indian ideal—the great ideal, of which the American professor knew very little. He simply represented the shallow prejudiced mind of the West, just as Antiphon represented the whole army of the Sophists in his estimation of Socrates with bare feet and scanty clothing. If some of these travellers rid themselves of their old prejudice before coming to visit any of the ancient countries of the Orient, they may be able to realize that there is more of the savage in the thought and expression of the prejudiced mind than in the outward habiliments of an innocent man.

In the general outlook of life the Western people have developed a realistic attitude. Probably it is due to the great influence of their Greek heritage. The Greek conceptions

of truth, beauty, and goodness seem to have been taken by them in the sense of the real rather than the ideal. To them in general truth is hardly different from reality and reality is not beyond what our senses tell us. They have thus developed their interest in things outside and sought to realize the meaning of the other two concepts also in the exterior of life. Beauty and goodness have been for them more on the surface than at the bottom. The bottom gets its meaning only from their knowledge of the surface.

This realistic spirit has a great bearing upon their esthetic and moral sides of life. All forms of luxury have captured their esthetic feeling. All kinds of formality have engrossed their moral outlook. They have sought to direct their minds almost exclusively to the physical and material aspects of life. They have found their success and greatness in the infinite forms of material comfort and luxury. They have given it the convenient name of 'higher standard of living.'

But it seems to be a new standard introduced into the human outlook of life—a

What standard of living they maintained would be understood from a story which is very popularly known throughout India.

Once a Rajah was holding his court while seated on his throne. All of a sudden the report came that the Mohammedans had defeated his army and come to attack the royal palace. The members of the royal court immediately began to run away to save their lives. But the Rajah could not go and soon became a captive of the Mohammedans. The reason why he could not escape was that there was nobody by him to fix his shoes on his feet and he never learnt to do it himself as it was a job meant not for him but for his servant, and that he could not run away barefooted being never used to do so.

The story may or may not be true. But the very fact that such a story is there certainly shows that the Indian could think of such an extreme form of ease and comfort in life. A thought like that could not arise and be popular unless there was the reality nearing somewhat like it.

The present Rajahs and Maharajahs of India still remind us of it. But the Rajahs

and the Maharajahs have never been the ideal men of India. Their ways of living have never been regarded as representing the highest standard of living. India has looked rather to her great Rishis for such a standard. It is these Rishis and not the Maharajahs who still inspire the people by their simplicity of life.

If the Hindus have emphasised looking after the needs and comforts of man's physical being, it is because they believe that the privation of the body may affect the moral and spiritual life of man. The body must be carefully looked after in order that the soul within may not suffer. The Hindus know it well. So they cannot be indifferent to the needs and comforts of the body. But when they think of such things they are very careful as to what and how much they really need for the good of their inward being. One may observe this very clearly in the highly selective habit of the Hindus with regard to their food. No other people on earth are so fastidious and finical about selecting their food-stuff. They would rather go under-nourished or even die of starvation than eat those things which they believe

to be morally and spiritually injurious for man. This selective habit is born of the high ideal of life. People of a low standard of living do not acquire a stern selective habit. They would eat anything that would satisfy their appetite and make them live and grow. The Hindu does not take food only to live and grow but also to live and grow in accordance with his high ideal of life. He considers his needs and comforts of the body as far as these are compatible with and conducive to his spiritual being. Whether his standard of living is high or low is to be judged not by what he has but by what he has become and in this becoming it is his inward being that is counted rather than his outward appearance.

By the high standard of living, therefore, the Hindus do not understand a luxurious or extravagant life. Their high living consists in having a clean mind in a clean body. The body should be kept neat and clean, it should be given all necessary comforts so that it may not suffer and thereby cause the inward being to suffer also. It should be so treated because it helps man to realize the soul's aspirations.

A suffering body may be an obstacle to him. This does not mean, however, that a man whose body suffers from some privation cannot live a high life. He can. His mind may be so strong and elevated that it can function without being the least affected by the privation of the body. But men of that type are far above the general level of mankind and are very rare. Still it is a fact that most great men have emerged not from luxuries but from the ordinary conditions of life. The standard of life that characterizes the Buddha, Socrates, and Christ cannot be regarded as low, unless we are insincere in our words of homage for them.

Suppose those great souls appear on earth again and go to live among the Western people who have made a fetish of their so-called high standard of living. They, of course, will have no love for the luxuries of the West. The great Buddha knew more about them when he was a prince than what the West knows now. But he renounced them all and took to a different way of living in order to become the Buddha. Socrates and Christ also knew about the great

luxuries of their times and could have certainly used them if they so desired. But they knew that the high standard of living did not consist in them. They did not care for luxuries. If they would now come to live among the Western people, they would choose to retain their simplicity of life. Would the Western people regard them as having a very low standard of living and seek to drive them out to preserve their so-called high standard ? Would they proudly proclaim to the world that they are inferior creatures ? It would be good then for India to welcome them all so that they may save her people from the spell of such a "high standard of living."

One should remember here, however, that the Hindus do not feel comfortable in their present deplorable conditions of social life. In fact, their present standard of living is far from their own. Their ideal of life, no doubt, holds them back from too much indulgence in luxuries, but they do not for that reason accept their present life of destitution as the proper type. History does not show that they ever liked the kind of life they are at present compelled by

circumstances to live. The present economic conditions of India have reduced them to a state of inconceivable poverty making their home, their joint family life, their regular social functions almost impossible. Far from having a standard of living they are now not living at all. Most of them are somehow dragging a miserable existence in a nominal home, half-starved and not even half-clothed. Yet, they stick to their home life, for it is there that they preserve at least something of their spiritual ambition.

Unlike many of the Western people who spend their whole life or, at least, the best part of their life in public hotels and restaurants or in rented apartments, the Hindus would rather suffer in an unsanitised home of their own than migrate from place to place like the ancient nomads. When they hear that more than fifty per cent of the urban families in the United States (and the Americans are mostly urban) are living in apartments, the Hindus may wonder what they mean by their high standard of living. Shifting and migratory life may give all sorts of thrill and enjoyment, but it is

not a quiet, peaceful, and happy life. Is it right to call it a high standard of living ? Yet, among all the Western countries America is said to have the highest standard of living.

If the Hindus find an opportunity to improve the poor conditions under which they are obliged somehow to spend their days, they can show what they mean by their high standard of living. They should not be judged by their present conditions. They are simply passing through a period of misfortunes. Let others not take advantage of it : it will not prove that they possess a higher standard of living.

CHAPTER XII

BOGEY OF INDIVIDUALITY

There seems to be an air of superiority in the complacent judgment that we Indians lack individuality, which means, of course, that they do not. We are said to be hedged in by so many things and in so many ways that we are unable to move out. Or even if there is a way out, we cannot move—we are so hopelessly swayed that we are not we but just a whim of history and geography. This is—so we are told—one of our peculiar characteristics.

The judgment cannot be regarded as absolutely true ; but, if purged of its ungracious insinuation, it is not absolutely false either. For, as they say in common parlance, it all depends upon how we take it— what we mean by individuality.

If individuality—whatever it truly means—is a gift of nature, we as men cannot be considered as devoid of it, while other men may

claim it. Externally such individuality would mean our physical distinction—that which makes us individuals. In that sense everything by its difference from the rest is possessed of individuality. As our physical distinction is not our responsibility, we mean by our individuality something different.

By individuality we may mean, then, something which has reference to our internal being. It is in the subjective self that we seek individuality, meaning by it a conscious difference from others and a successful attempt to maintain that difference.

But a conscious difference from others presupposes a conscious self—a self which recognizes a non-self comprehending other selves. Human individuality develops itself in the realization of this self as something distinct. The realization of self again is in its integration, the various impulses and propensities being its component parts. So conscious self and individuality may be regarded as identical. Any person who has not been able to compose his impulses and propensities is devoid of individuality; since he is not an integrated self, he

is merely an impulse or an isolated tendency at a time. We call a man wild when he behaves under the influence of a strong impulse over which he has no control : it is a negation of self. This is whv when a person has done some act of violence in the heat of a momentary passion he afterwards consoles himself saying, " Oh, I was not myself." Individuality exists where there is self-control.

But self-control is a necessary condition of individuality and may not be identical with it. For, self-control is not quite inconsistent with the dependence of self upon non-self. In a happy family the different members may live in an atmosphere of interdependence and yet they may all have self-control ; in fact their peaceful life of interdependence means their self-control. Do they have individuality ? The answer may be both in the negative and affirmative. Firstly, they do not because they are so much determined by one another. Each member has to consider that he belongs to the family and then conducts himself accordingly. Secondly, they do have their individuality inasmuch as their being determined by one

another is a voluntary affair without the sense of mutual imposition and as such not against their individuality. It should, however, be remembered that all individuality is destroyed in an atmosphere of imposition. When we voluntarily allow ourselves to be determined in a certain way, there is no imposition ; for the choice is ours and we can have it in any way we like.

True individuality means, then, in a nutshell, liberty. But be it noted here that it is liberty, not licence. There is no individuality in the "I-don't-care" mentality of a habitual swashbuckler. It is the mentality of the brute who does not care unless he is compelled to ; and the brute knows nothing about individuality. True individuality cares, for it is an integrated self which may destroy itself by offending the non-self. It respects but does not submit. It asserts itself in all its activities without being destructive. It does not seek to destroy, nor does it allow itself to be destroyed.

If individuality means liberty, liberty in its turn means responsibility. Is such

responsibility an imposition? No, because it is self enjoying itself.

There is, however, no absolute liberty when our dependence is not voluntary but necessary. There are things such as earth, air, water, light, food, etc., upon which we necessarily depend. The greatest man would fare no better without them than the wildest savage. Thus individuality in the sense of complete liberty does not exist for man

But we do not understand individuality in that extreme sense. We regard it as a social value in human relationship, and we have already seen how it is developed in human life.

Now, the question is whether we Indians really lack that individuality and whether those who say we do really possess it themselves. Our very ideal of life which is our own choice and not a creed-bound commandment gives us full scope for self-building; and we consider ourselves but too poor creatures if we fail to begin our active life with the idea of self-control. This necessarily gives rise to an inner sense of morality rather than an

outer show of formality; and inasmuch as the latter involves more or less a kind of self-deception, it gives a person no chance to develop his individuality. Our attitude toward life is not scientific but philosophical, not partial but comprehensive, not analytic but synthetic. Individuality being an integral whole can develop itself only in the synthetic spirit of life. The cultivation of certain faculties to the neglect of others may make a person useful but not a living whole. Expertism means no more individuality than an over-enlarged part proclaiming itself to be the whole.

Our traditions, customs and conventions do not affect our individuality in society. Our love for them is spontaneous ; they are not forced upon us. Our ideal being liberty through self-control we do not allow any non-self to control us.

We are abhorrent of those things that seek to affect our self-control. That the customs and conventions do not affect our individuality may be derived from the fact that we are not disturbed when we see others following their

own things different from ours. If we go to a foreign country, we temporarily adopt its ways showing thereby our respect for its individuality; but we adopt them as far as possible without losing our individuality. He indeed lacks individuality who is so lost in his own customs and conventions that he is intolerant of any difference and seeks to impose his own upon those who choose to be different. Individuality is based upon the conscious feeling of difference ; repugnance to difference is, therefore, a negation of individuality. How can we then admit any individuality in those who seek to establish a mechanical uniformity wherever they go ? Do we not see that those, who accuse us of having no individuality of our own, show not the least sign of it by their conduct ? If individuality is an inward achievement, as we have seen it is, it cannot be disturbed by the external variation of our lives.

True individuality is out from within and not in from without. It is like the saintly halo emanating from inner excellence and not from external exhibition. It does not manifest itself

in that craze for style or the latest fashion—a craze which is their peculiar malady. What kind of individuality is there when, as Henry David Thoreau puts it, the head of the monkeys at Paris puts on a traveller's cap and all the monkeys in Europe and America do the same! Where conformity to an ever-changing fashion is demanded from outside, it becomes an insult to the individuality of man.

We have been rather too individualistic in our ways and that is why we could not form a nation. The very idea of nation is a denial of individuality inasmuch as it enjoins uniformity. Our individuality, however, does not make us unsocial or dangerous; for we know that all danger ultimately feeds upon itself. We strive to save our individuality by recognizing it in others; for, individuality thrives in reciprocity.

We do not believe in commandments, be they social or religious, just because they are commandments. They smack of despotism, if not militarism, and both are destructive of individuality. We believe in principles when we know why they are principles. Commandment is imposition, while principle is assimila-

tion; one is enslaving, the other is embellishing.

Frequent changes in the externalities of life do not mean individuality. It means a continual feeling of maladjustment, while individuality rests on adjustment. Besides, such changes disclose an inward poverty for which the compensation is sought outside and it is sought in vain. Individuality is a rational whole which shines over our possession and makes us satisfied with what would be otherwise considered as meagre. It is a highly self-conscious entity whose source of enjoyment is itself.

We are slow to change, because every change is a new problem of adjustment to our individuality. What is new is not necessarily good or worth-while for that is determined by its adjustability. We go slow, because adjustment requires understanding and understanding requires time. Any change is immediately welcome only where there is no individuality and, therefore, no need of adjustment.

We are not averse to change, but we may be indifferent to it, inasmuch as our wealth is

our individuality and not what comes to us from outside. A change is destructive of individuality when it appears as an external force demanding its adoption.

We do not allow any expert tailor from anywhere to dictate what sort of dress we should wear and how long we should wear it. We need no tuxedo to be eligible to a certain place on a certain occasion. Our dress is our own individual choice consistent with the purse we possess and the climate we live in. We tolerate no intolerance of our individual likes and dislikes. We maintain our personal individuality by recognizing it in all of us. We are individuals because we agree to disagree in all our outward appearances and even in our ways of thinking. Our ideal is to become one in spirit while many in appearances, tastes, and tendencies.

The vision of our individuality transcends time and space, because it seeks to realize itself as the transparent microcosm and is never lost in the immediate. We cannot talk of loving our neighbour only as we love ourselves, while indulging in hating our neighbour's

neighbour because nothing is said about him. True individuality seeks adjustment with all and not with a special class only, because it cannot afford to be at odds with anything without detriment to itself. It develops itself by trying to realize that every living thing is a wonderful microcosm potentially not less than any. It desires, therefore, to establish a friendly relation with the entire universe and does not encourage one to talk, in a military fashion, of conquering this or that; for in a friendly feeling there is no idea of conquest. It is a destructive idea and true individuality does not deal with it; we seek to individualize everything, because our individuality enjoys itself by a fellowship of individuals.

Let us say, therefore, that in our idea of individuality what we consider as of highest importance is our internal and external adjustment. Our internal adjustment makes for the integrated self and external adjustment causes its growth. Our individuality is constantly confronted with the problem of possession, for we are in constant danger of giving our possession a chance to possess ourselves.

CHAPTER XIII

OUR CULTURAL RENEGADES

The liberal outlook of the Indian civilization should be a matter of great pride to all Hindus. It has an underlying spiritual principle which enables them to understand that truth may reveal itself in many ways and that no one can claim the monopoly of it. With such an understanding they naturally develop a fine spirit of tolerance for things of others, however different these may be from their own. Indeed their spirit of tolerance is so well cultivated that they do not find it hard to show a respectful attitude to what is an object of respect to others, while at the same time they profess and love what is their own.

It is their cultural tradition which has enabled the Hindus to cultivate this spirit throughout all ages. Since the first flowering of the great Aryan culture the ancestors of the Hindus had been periodically confronted with many cultural problems. The impact of the

powerful Dravidian civilization was not an easy matter for them to settle. Instead of stirring up a sharp conflict between the two to have one or the other destroyed, they sought to infuse the sublime principles of the Aryan civilization into the important aspects of the Dravidian civilization and thus slowly to draw the latter to be absorbed in the former. In a like manner they drew many from the huge aboriginal population and then absorbed them. When the ancient Greeks invaded India and after a long protracted war succeeded in establishing their power over an extensive part of the land, there arose a new cultural problem for the Hindus. The Greek civilization began to threaten the civilization of India. This time the problem was far more difficult being caused by the strong impact of the civilization of the conquerors who came there to impose and not to be absorbed. Nevertheless the noble Hindus, with full confidence in the greatness of their civilization, solved the problem successfully. The British historian V. A. Smith says, in his *The Early History of India*, "The campaign (of Alexander), al-

though carefully designed to secure a permanent conquest, was in actual effect no more than a brilliantly successful raid on a gigantic scale, which left upon India no marks save the horrid scars of bloody war. India remained unchanged. The wounds of battle were quickly healed ; the ravaged fields smiled again as the patient oxen and no less patient husbandmen resumed their interrupted labours ; and the places of the slain myriads were filled by the teeming swarms of a population. . . . India was not Hellenized. She continued to live her life of 'splendid isolation,' and soon forgot the passing of the Macedonian storm. No Indian author, Hindu, Buddhist or Jain, makes even the faintest allusion to Alexander or his deeds."

The power-mad Greek invaders, instead of appreciating and protecting the civilization of India, tried to destroy it and impose their own civilization in its place. But the Hindus were wise enough to realize that it meant nothing but a permanent charter of their cultural slavery and hence could think of no other alternative than to sweep away every-

thing of the Greeks so that those of them who chose to settle in India had to merge themselves completely in the Hindus. India took care to efface from the mind of the people her opprobrious connection with the intransigent Greeks and to re-vindicate the power and glory of her civilization. What she had lost of her glory on account of the reverses in her military encounters with the Greeks she fully compensated by her complete cultural victory. This single historical fact has a great bearing upon the just cultural pride of the Hindus. It clearly shows the internal strength of their civilization and the deepest feeling of love with which their worthy ancestors regarded it. Otherwise, a cultural victory over the Greek civilization could not have been achieved. For it was also a very powerful civilization. We cannot but recognize its great inherent strength when we remember that it successfully asserted its power over the great Roman civilization even though the Romans conquered Greece.

The Greeks were followed by many other types of invaders like the Sakas, the Huns and

the Scythians. They came to India, carried on their predatory occupations and finally began to settle in the land. The influx of such a large number of wild people "shook Indian society in Northern India to its foundations, severed the chain of tradition, and brought about a rearrangement of both castes and ruling families." But anyhow they were absorbed and the Indian civilization continued its course of self-development.

Then poured in like a deluge the huge swarms of Mohammedan invaders—the Arabs, the Tartars, and the Moguls. Again there began in India fresh raids, carnage, and rapine causing a terrible havoc upon the Indian civilization. The final victory of these people and the establi hment of their ruling power in the land created again a cultural problem far worse than any the Hindus had faced before. With the new rulers appeared their youthful civilization—a civilization which carried with it a proud Arabic tradition of uncompromising self-assertion. Their campaign for cultural propagation was openly supported by force and coercion. Many poor Hindus

yielded, while many more of them resolutely took up the cause of their beloved civilization even though it brought them untold sufferings. Great and noble indeed was the spirit which countless Hindus showed in their eagerness to suffer and sacrifice in order that the honour of their civilization might be saved. It certainly had its effect upon some great Mohammedan rulers whose liberal policy brought about a change in the situations and there seemed to appear an atmosphere permitting the two civilizations to exist side by side in a sort of fraternal relation.

With the implicit recognition of this arrangement it became possible to find peace in India. The Hindus took this occasion to see how they could repair the old damages in their civilization in order to hold it aloft again and maintain its former glory. The Mohammedans had already lived long enough in India to be impressed by some of the high ideals of this civilization and although their Arabic tradition of cultural bigotry had its strong exhortations to certain extremes, they did not prove to be wholly impervious to the silent

influences of the Hindus. Many Mohammedan scholars arose to study the Indian civilization and carry much of its spiritual and scientific wealth to far away lands in the East as well as in the West to enrich the cultural heritage of others. Such an act on their part necessarily meant an unconscious process of cultural infiltration from the Indian civilization into their own ideology and an indirect support of that civilization to regain its former self-confidence and to foster new hopes.

But soon again another cultural problem began to form itself with an ever-increasing magnitude. The British people arrived in India following several other European nationalities and somehow or other, from obliging merchants and missionaries, they succeeded in finally becoming the rulers of India. This transfer of power to the hands of a new alien race representing an entirely different civilization marked the beginning of a sharp cultural conflict which has been going on in India ever since. The unfortunate Hindus, while still seriously occupied with the problem of settling the confused conditions of their

cultural life caused by the long impact of Islam, have been facing at the same time the subtle onslaught of what the Western people call their Christian civilization. Islam in India has not altogether given up its former policy to spread itself amongst the indigenous population and the dominant Western people evidently have the spiritual inspiration to respect such a convenient corollary of the first Commandment as "Thou shalt follow no other civilization." Consider then how the Indian civilization has been surrounded by the forces of two vigorous civilizations, more especially the Western civilization which being associated with the ruling people has its highly glamorous power of persuasion.

The agents of the Western civilization have been carrying on their work along various lines under pious pretensions and in a very highly organized manner. It is true that Mohammedans were sometimes rather unkind in their cultural aggression, but they were frank. From simple conviction they did what they said. There was some kind of chivalry in it. It openly

demanded heroic sacrifices from the Hindus. When more than enough sacrifices came forth in quick response many ruling Mohammedans were impressed. The Hindus met the undisguised attack of the Mohammedans and became ready for the sacrifices. But the cultural aggression of the Western people is of a different nature. Its forces are mostly in various disguised forms, often with fine unctuous names and there seems to be no good cause for any clash or protest or even anxiety. Yet, one who has eyes can see the effect of such aggression in the unfortunate fact that the Indian civilization has been losing its former power and prestige more and more among an increasing number of even the Hindus themselves.

In the long cultural history of India there never was another occasion when the Indian civilization faced a crisis like the present one. Foreigners having heard of the wealth and prosperity of India came to invade the country, looted and destroyed many precious things. The cultural problem which arose was how to absorb them. If their presence at first had

caused some confusion or even some demoralization in the Hindu society, great reformers appeared in the field, made some new adjustments and there was order again. The broad outlook of the Indian civilization made it easy for them to change or modify the social arrangements and every innovation was a fresh impetus to the growth of the civilization itself. This had been possible because the Hindus had the firmest faith and the fullest confidence in the greatness of their own civilization, and if there were good things in other people's civilization, these were introduced to adorn their own. Their civilization was the dearest thing to them which they could adorn with things from elsewhere to enhance its beauty and majesty but to which they could never think of being disloyal. It was like their sweet mother whose sublime beauty they would not question and whose elevating relation they could not sever. Like the most devoted children they had the unshakable conviction that nothing on earth could be even a pale substitute for their own great civilization.

But now, alas! it is not the same that we see. Unfortunate things have been happening around constantly putting the Indian civilization on severe trial. Many Hindus themselves, perhaps a large majority of them, have been affected by the persistent conditions in which it has been possible for the Western civilization to appear with its misleading temptations and subtle persuasions.

But not all of them, however, have been equally affected. If we should make a classification, we may arrange them in three principal groups: (1) Those whose faith in the Hindu civilization has been shaken more or less, although they still follow it; (2) Those who have for some reasons or other yielded to temptations and thus drifted away from their cultural moorings; (3) Those who eagerly imitate the Western people and show similar enthusiasm in their critical attitude toward the Indian civilization.

The first group is unquestionably the largest of all. In fact, it is very difficult to say how many of the Hindus—excepting fortunately, of course, those millions who have

not received the benefit of the present system of education at all and constitute the bulk of the population—have been able to maintain intact their firm faith in the greatness of their civilization and would not fall even in this group. We may call them our cultural sceptics. But they are not wholly to be blamed for being so. It is the peculiar conditions which invariably exert their influence toward that effect. The presence of the foreign rulers representing an alien civilization is itself a constant argument in favour of that civilization. The solemn air of their higher political status, the supreme confidence in their actions and expressions, and the gorgeous paraphernalia of their powerful government, —all these have common persuasive impressions upon the subject people. They see everywhere behind the privileged position of their rulers a strange civilization which makes the latter so great and powerful, while their own civilization appears to be impotent before it. The desire to compare their position with the position of the ruling people unconsciously leads them to see the two civilizations in a

comparative mood. They have already found, since their early school days, plenty of literature giving golden ideas on the Western life, history, and civilization. And the various organizations of the alien civilizers have, of course, been busy spreading informations directly or indirectly criticising, if not condemning, the Indian civilization. There is bound to be an effect of all this upon the cultural inclinations of the Hindus—although it varies according to their inward preparation in the indigenous system and the outward circumstances amidst which they live.

This is not an unmixed evil, however, for it prevents any light-hearted complacency from overtaking the Hindu society and keeps its great leaders vigilant and active exercising their minds on the various questions of reforming and rehabilitating some factors or others of their civilization as new circumstances arise. Our cultural sceptics do not create any serious danger to the Indian civilization as long as they live as Hindus. All Hindus are supposed to live traditionally, though they may think freely. For, the tradition conserves their ideal

of life and it is the manner of living which counts in the Indian civilization rather than that of believing.

Still, the cultural problem is there with anxious forebodings. If the cause for scepticism continues to operate freely and uninterruptedly and no action is taken to control or counteract it, scepticism may be followed by open criticism and ultimately even revolt.

The second group is also very large and is becoming larger and larger every day. Most of this group come from the Christian converts. Originally they were living their simple Hindu lives paying their respect with the sincerest feeling to the Hindu ideal as customs and other sources of their little self-education enabled them to understand it, but either through various temptations offered by the Christian missionaries or through the cruelty of many short-sighted Hindus or perhaps through both, they gave up the faith of their forefathers and became Christians. With every possible allowance for the needs of the time we must admit that it is one of the most, if not the most, unfortunate things in the

history of India that so liberal a culture as Hinduism should permit the caste system to assume such a cruel form as it has assumed and no reformers arose with enough courage and power to take it back to its original conception of the *Gita* or to suppress it altogether to let the people develop a new order of society consistent with their noble ideal of life. It is after all these centuries of caste severity weakening the Indian civilization ever and evermore to its present state of crisis that at last our land has given us a reformer strong and courageous enough, though physically small and weak, to stop the crime and save the Hindus from committing cultural suicide. With his indomitable will and high spiritual personality he is sure to win success, and already there are good signs of it. That day when caste rigidity and untouchability would be a thing of the past should be celebrated by all good Hindus as a red-letter day.

At any rate, the Hindus have lost several millions of their own cultural fellows, who have joined the Christian fold to the great encouragement, joy, and hope of those who

have been dreaming of the collapse of the Indian civilization. There may be many among them who still follow the Hindu ways of life, though they profess the Christian faith. It shows that Hinduism is still alive in them and they may not continue long to constitute a cultural problem if the Hindus are discreet enough to do their duty in proper time.

But there are others among them, perhaps of not an unequal number, who are very different. Either on account of their past grievances against some orthodox Hindus or the peculiar training they receive from the missionaries or both, they show a completely un-Hindu spirit in their general conduct. They seem really to secede from the Hindu fold and offer themselves to be used against Hinduism in any manner the Christian missionaries may choose. They develop a keen appetite for the forbidden food of the Hindus and a keener interest in such alien social customs as ball-room dancing, courtship, divorce, etc. Many of them disown their ancestral names and may like to be known as Anglo-Indians even though nothing of their physiognomical or

epidermic properties reveals the faintest trace of the English in them. In their mode of thinking there is more of the missionary cult than Christianity. They carefully remember the common missionary formulas of criticism against the Indian civilization and harangue on them in an assuming emotionalism to impress their audience against the "curse of Hinduism." Some of them are employed as "assistants" in the missionary organisations in India, their important occupation being to get new converts from the simple Hindu folks to swell their own number. Their work is very valuable indeed to such organizations, inasmuch as they are quite familiar with the ways and manners of and easily accessible to the loyal Hindus who share with them the same racial blood and pay more attention to what they say than to the foreign missionaries. They know how and whom to approach and what will make them yield. They certainly make a better success than their masters. Those others who may have opportunities to go to the blessed land of their spiritual mentors, are often found to speak there in various

church organizations and public assemblies on India and her civilization emphasising the dark side in every possible manner so as to convey the impression that Hinduism is essentially bad and must be discarded. What they say in foreign countries has greater significance than the usual propaganda of foreigners to misrepresent and insult India. To the people in foreign countries Indian Christians are as good as real Indians; in fact they hardly remember the distinction between the two types when they hear them and what they hear they sincerely take for a true representation of the Indian civilization. These Indian Christians find more opportunities, through the help of their missionary agents, to speak on things Indian than any Hindus who may also visit such lands. They are cordially invited to speak in hundreds of denominational churches and many semi-religious organizations where the Hindus may go to listen but hardly to speak. I am writing this from my own personal experience in foreign countries and when I talked about these things to some other Indians, who too were in foreign

lands, they bore me out by describing their own similar experiences.

Who can imagine how painful it is to the Hindus to see their own countrymen, nay their blood brothers, turn out to be such cultural renegades as they! As soon as they become Christians they look to the West for all inspirations of life and listen to their Western masters to form their attitude toward the Hindus and the Indian civilization. Their conscience is sold to many Western enthusiasts like Rev. Alexander Duff who, according to Mr. Andrews, "looked forward to the supplanting of one civilization by another, the uprooting of the Indian civilization and the substitution of the English." They see no use of the Indian civilization any more. They want India to be a kingdom of Christ which, of course, means a happy land for their Western masters. For, an Indian kingdom of Christ would mean to them the passing of the "false gods," temples, holy places and other great reservoirs of Hindu art, architecture, music, and so on, and the coming of the "only true god," churches of all denominations with

Gothic architecture, Roman music, Latin prayers, and a vast number of Western priests, ministers, and other great soldiers of Christ. That is the kind of India which these Indian Christians have in their dream and for which they have been trained to work. It is largely through their assistance that the foreign missionaries have been carrying on their work of destruction. The measure of success in this work, even as early as 1900, seemed to make the latter highly optimistic. Thus, Rev. Dr. George F. Pentecost said at a conference on foreign missions, " The greatest results of foreign missions are to be found in India. The religion of the Hindoos is a rock-ribbed and rock-based belief, but the impact of Christianity has broken it into a dozen fragments. . . . It may be said that the missionaries in heathen lands have thus far been digging under ground, preparatory to a great overturning. . . . To the eye not much appears, but deep down great influences are at work." A happy work indeed ! To this work our worthy Indian " assistants " contribute very eagerly. And they are quite proud of what they do !

But the question is, can India be proud of them ?

While these Christian enthusiasts of India form by themselves a powerful group of our cultural renegades, there is another large group among the Hindus who too may be entitled to the same epithet. They generally come from the "over-educated" Hindu population, especially from those who happen to cross the sea and visit England or some other Western country for an educational purpose. Happily there are many Indians who go to study in the West, live there as true representatives of cultural India and return home with high aspirations to serve the noble cause of their beloved civilization by utilising their knowledge and experience of the foreign lands. The love of the Western people for their civilization inspires them to love their own more and more. They are like true devoted sons whose love for their mother becomes more intensive as they see others love their own mother. When they hear the Western people speak in praise of their civilization, they look for opportunities to speak in praise of theirs too.

They are justly proud of their civilization for all its defects and they certainly deserve the blessings of their motherland. But there are others who go to the West to develop a different mentality. Perhaps the unfortunate status of the subject people to which they belong works heavily on their minds while still they are in India and creates in them a hidden desire to recognize the superiority of the ruling people and all that they represent. Before they go abroad they belong to the general group of our cultural sceptics with that hidden desire getting stronger. The social environment of the Hindus exerts its restraining influence over it. But as they get out of that environment and set out for the land of their rulers they show a curious change in themselves— a spirit of revolt against their traditional customs and a fond sense of liberality in their new taste for things Western. It is true that circumstances in foreign countries often make it necessary for them to live in certain deviations from their usual customs and conventions at home and the liberal spirit of the Indian civilization would not like them to be condemned

on that account. In fact, the Hindu cultural tradition is broad and varied enough to accommodate them by referring to a certain period of its long history when the Hindus might have lived in similar ways without regarding them as deviations. But the truth is that they adopt such ways of the Western life with a spirit which seems to reveal their choice rather than necessity. It is this spirit which is most damaging to the prestige and power of the Indian civilization.

Some years ago a young Indian gentleman was returning from England to India on the Pacific way. He stopped at Manila for a few days and was received there by the Indian community. A Sindhi merchant very kindly arranged for his room and board in his own house while another Indian took him around to let him see the interesting things of the city. On one evening another Indian merchant gave him a dinner party to which several Indians including myself were invited. The young man saw that the dinner was prepared in Indian fashion and we were going to use our fingers in eating our food. At the table

he frankly said that he could not do without knife and fork. Our host supplied him with them. As we were eating we were also eagerly listening to his interesting talk on his various experiences and impressions. Finally when we came to the subject of India he assumed an extremely critical attitude in his reference to almost everything he pleased. He touched on the problem of our so many languages, the stupid superstitions, the nasty social habits and customs, and so on. His manner of criticism was very similar to the European's—full of the air of pity and disgust—as if he was himself a European. He took up even the subject of Indian manner of dressing and was clearly emphatic in declaring that the Indian *dhuti* was indecent.

His spirit of criticism was a great surprise to me, perhaps also to most other Indians in the party who having had no college education were only shy to speak out their mind. But his attack upon the Indian *dhuti* broke my patience and made me very curious about him. I asked him how long he had been in England. When he told me that he had been

there for about two years, I could not help saying how, in the course of two years, he had swallowed so much English education as to judge our simple *dhuti* as indecent! He surely did not like my tone of disapprobation, for he did not think that having had his education in England he would find any Indian to question the truth of his judgment.

This young Anglicised gentleman is a typical example of many Indians who happen to be for some time in Europe, especially in Great Britain, where they develop a peculiar psychosis owing perhaps to what we have already said and also to the usual snubbing of some ungracious people of that land. They generally represent a spirit which is very significant. It has the potential inclination to defy the whole Indian civilization.

When I met such type at Paris or at London I had to be very careful lest I might create an uncongenial situation around me by expressing "funny" or "silly" ideas or talking like an "idiot." Happily some of them knew me already from my writings and showed a little sober spirit before me in their

enthusiasm for "civilization." I noticed that they tried to rationalize their infatuation for the Western civilization by citing the convenient dictum, "When you are in Rome, act as the Romans do." Prudence required that there should be no comment from me on what appeared to them to be a plain truth and I only smiled my reaction to it.

But it seems they forgot that this saying arose in Europe because the Romans were the civilizers of the savage northerners, and Rome was to the latter a great inspiration in their cultural assimilation. The northerners used to go to Rome to follow the civilized Romans and thus to learn about civilization. To use the same saying in support of the Hindus showing their preference for the Western ways while they are in the West is to admit they believe they are culturally inferior to the Westerners whom they must imitate to be recognized as civilized. Otherwise, if the dictum be given a universal significance to appear as a principle, how would those Hindus like to live, supposing they happen to be in the land of the Hottentots or some other

cannibals? It is doubtful if there would be even one among them to show their respect for the principle by doing exactly as the cannibals do. They should see that the very Westerners do not follow that principle when they go to live in non-Western countries including India. By trying to follow the West in everything even though it is not absolutely necessary they sometimes do not give a very good impression of themselves and of India. Occasions may arise when imitation becomes intrusion and gives rise to ugly criticism against the Indian civilization with which it is natural for foreigners to connect them.

When these Hindus return to India with some educational qualification which is recognized by the rulers and which, therefore, enables them to make a prosperous living, they begin to live as if they have forgotten they are Hindus. Their position in the Government circle and their opportunities of contact with the ruling race seem to give them a wholly transformed outlook. They speak English at home and make their children learn to do the same. They may have, if

they can afford, a European governess for their children—one who can bring them up in European fashion and save them from any contact with the "natives." They hardly think it worth-while to study their sacred literature. It is doubtful if their children find the opportunity properly to assimilate the stories of the Epics and the Puranas. They hold the same critical attitude toward the Indian civilization as any bigoted foreigner. They may go even further in ridiculing some aspects of it. There is a deliberate sense of pride in their imitation of the foreigners and when they attack their own civilization they may assume an air which to many people would appear as insolent. They do not say that they are not Hindus, but they behave as if they are not and as if they would lose nothing if the Indian civilization is destroyed. They too are our *Sahebs*, though of the darker brand, to whom the lesser Indians are the same *Baboos* as they are to our foreign bureaucrats.

They certainly feel very confident of what they do. We do not know how they would

take what the great British statesman Ramsay Macdonald thought about them. Thus he wrote in his *The Government of India*, "The Oriental Club in Calcutta is not India—God forbid that it should become India. The Indians who have been at Oxford and Cambridge, London or Edinburgh, and who spend the rest of their lives on special plots on Indian soil amidst special products of British education, are too often a community by themselves, in India but not of it. Living in India, not the geographical expression but the Motherland of a people and the atmosphere of a race, they are not at home there. Not able to join in the organic life of their community, they tend to become parasitical and to live on it. They have to create new ways of living, from multiplying legal cases to quack doctoring; and, when this is observed by critics, the Indian is condemned, whereas the blame lies very largely with those who have placed false ideals before him, and have led him in mistaken ways. We sought to give the Eastern mind a Western content and environment; we have succeeded too well in estab-

lishing intellectual and moral anarchy in both."

Some of these Indians may pose as our reformers when they are caught by some strong though not less educated Hindu. They like to insist that by their manner of living they are trying to reform Hinduism. They do not seem to realize that reformers are not renegades. Reformers love their civilization as dearly as—nay, more than—anybody else. They have the firmest faith in its ideal. They want to maintain its power and glory intact by changing things, which have outlived their uses, for some other things which must be substituted to meet the needs of the time. Reformers do not want the destruction of their civilization, nor do they enjoy ridiculing its weak points. When they see that their civilization is threatened from somewhere, they feel very much concerned and seek to strengthen it by reforming or rebuilding some parts of the structure. But the renegades are different. They have little love for the civilization. In fact they seem to feel ashamed of showing it their allegiance and may openly

wish its death. Their manner of living is a continual challenge and an insult to it. They themselves form a cultural problem for the reformers.

Thus we see there are two principal groups of cultural renegades by whom our civilization has been afflicted from within while it has to resist many destructive forces from outside. Both groups have their spheres of influence. The people of the first group being drawn from the backward classes of the Hindus have chosen their field of work particularly among these classes which are more accessible to them than the higher ones who are less gullible on account of their comparatively better cultural understanding. The work of this group has been carried on quietly in the favourable atmosphere of Hindu indifference and the result which it yields is encouraging enough for them to have many glowing dreams. The people of the second group emerge mostly from the so-called upper or more fortunate classes and exert their influence over the same classes. When they first return from foreign countries with some special training which is

said to be of great use for the good of the country and for which they receive public acclamation, they already gain some recognition of their importance among the educated masses. This recognition keeps the masses interested in their career and they come under their influence through direct or indirect contact with them, when subsequently they see them holding prosperous and powerful position in the present ruling system—a position which has its hidden attraction for all. They may not exert their influence by any direct persuasion, still indirectly there is some influence on account of the general recognition of their supposed importance and the attractive splendour of their position.

If the people of the first group are approached when they are busy in their favourite field of action and told what a great problem they are trying to create in the cultural life of India by seeking more and more converts to Christianity from among the Hindus, they may reply with an air of perfect innocence that by converting the Hindus they are just helping them to be better Indians.

They may even express their surprise to hear that they are creating a cultural problem by their work, contending that such change of faith cannot affect the Indian civilization in any dangerous manner. If they give such a reply it is because they should give some reply, for they certainly know that their work does create a great cultural problem. How can it be otherwise? What remains there to support their civilization if the Hindus change their ways and outlook of life? And does not the acceptance of Christianity mean all that change? To those simple-hearted Hindus whom they approach to convert, Christianity is Westernity. If they do not realize it, their Western masters certainly do. The latter may not be heard to admit it while they are in India, but they proudly reveal it to their people when they return home. President Capen of the American Board of Mission, in a speech in the Ecumenical Conference held in 1900, said thus, "When a man becomes a child of God he wants everything that is Christian—Christian clothing, Christian furniture, Christian agricultural implements, and

everything Christian. We have the motto that 'Trade always follows the flag,' but it is not true, as I could show you if I had the time; but this is true: 'Trade always follows the missionary'." President Capen is quite right, for, the adoption of Western ways of life along with Christianity means the demand for Western goods and consequently a booming Western trade. As the Western people profess to be Christian, the Hindus take them to represent true Christian life, for to the latter religion is inseparable from life. If those Christian people of the West want the Hindus to accept Christianity and not to follow their lives, then they mean to say that their lives do not represent their belief. It may be true that their lives do not represent their belief, but the people who are drawn into the Christian fold cannot assimilate that subtlety of dual life and innocently take their belief through the senses by following their masters' ways of life. In the name of Christianity come all things of the Christians, the converts try to follow them believing that they thus become as good Christians as their masters.

If the people of the second group are similarly approached, they may try to justify themselves by saying that the progress of their country demands that they should be modern, that they should follow the spirit of the age, and so forth. It, of course, well becomes their important position to speak of such big things as progress, modernism, spirit of the age, etc., but those who have in their minds the real good of their civilization cannot rest satisfied with such abstract explanation when they know that it does not solve the cultural problem of the land. Neither progress nor modernism means that we should be the cultural slaves of others. No progress is possible for us by deviating from or revolting against the ideal of our civilization. As regards modernism, it is not the absolute property of any particular civilization. Every civilization can have its new evolutionary phases which the people possessing it may adopt to be modern in their own cultural way. To be modern does not mean to be Western. What is modern to-day in one civilization might have been the practice of another in its

by-gone days. The spirit of the age is not a divine dispensation for all men to follow. It is something created by some people, whose temporary importance makes it appear as a dominant something. Democracy was once said to be the spirit of the age, but now the people of certain countries are changing that spirit by upholding dictatorship. In the same manner some other people may uphold another spirit again. If India regains her old sturdy self-confidence and can make her people feel ashamed to be cultural slaves of foreigners, she too can create a new spirit which can aspire to be the spirit of the age.

But that hope cannot be realized as long as there are cultural problems like what we have seen. The greatest misfortune that can happen to a subject people is the loss of faith in its cultural heritage. The culture of a people represents its common soul. It possesses the strongest power to exercise a fine unifying influence and to inspire a profound sense of self-confidence which enables the people in general to protect their moral

backbone against all invading forces. There is nothing in the world that can substitute it without causing a moral and spiritual confusion among them. Once they develop that state of confusion, any one may use them as human automatons quietly to bury their own culture for ever.

CHAPTER XIV

LIGHT OF OPTIMISM

A few years ago I was travelling in a British ship from Calcutta to Singapore on my way to Manila. There were only a a few higher class passengers. Most of them were Britishers, whose usual high-browed exclusiveness made me seek companionship elsewhere. The Bengali doctor of the ship appeared to feel no better than I and we two found consolation in each other's company. I used to go with him sometimes when he took his inspection round among the deck passengers. This gave me an opportunity to talk with some Indians there, and whenever I had nothing else to do I liked going to them to enjoy their good nature and sincere conversation. Once when I was there I saw several of them taking hard exercise. I was told that they were doing it in order to be able to digest their hard *chana-dal* which was the only food they had when our ship

left Port Sweetenham for Singapore. The general provision which they had brought from India was exhausted owing to the unexpected stoppage and delay at Port Sweetenham. They did not know that the ship instead of going direct, as was usual, from Penang to Singapore, would stop at that intermediate port and for full three days. They had only that hard food-stuff left. I saw one of them a little sick, perhaps because of a lack of proper food. I went upstairs and returned with some cake for them. When I offered this they seemed very grateful but said nothing more. I left them thinking that they would eat it when I was gone. But to my great surprise I saw from a distance, where they could not see me, that one of them took the cake, threw it out into the sea through a port-hole and washed his hands before coming back to sit. I came again shortly after and enquired how they liked the cake, as though I did not see what they did with it. They seemed very embarrassed and hesitant to answer. One of them, somewhat senior in age, said in a humble tone,

"Babuji, it was very kind of you to give us that thing, but we could not eat it."

I said, "Why?"

He replied, "We are Hindus, Babuji, we do not know of what things it is made and who made it."

I—But you see I too am a Hindu and of a high caste. I eat such food.

He—I know you do. But, Babuji, we cannot do it. You are a big man, you can do anything you like. We humble fellows would not do anything against our *dharma*, we would rather die.

I—What have you done with the cake?

He—We have thrown it into the sea.

He was followed by some more of them, one after another, explaining the matter in a regretful tone that I might not feel offended by misunderstanding them. They tried to make me understand that they meant no disrespect to me, but they were confident of what they did. They were very glad when they heard me say that I was not the least offended. They were barbers by caste coming from the

Gorakhpur district and were going to Singapore to find some means of living.

This little episode has its great significance for India, although it may be taken by many people as an example of usual Hindu fanaticism.

I may recall another example of even a stronger type which was mentioned by Mr. C. F. Andrews in his *The Renaissance in India*. It was the case of a very poor Hindu who had no food for several days and as a consequence became almost a skeleton. He was faintly crying for food on the road side. One European missionary having seen it brought a piece of buttered bread and placed it before him. The man saw the food and after glancing at the missionary spat upon it as if it was something very loathsome to him. He made the missionary understand that he would rather die of hunger than eat anything offered by a Christian.

A greater fanatic, this Hindu? According to the missionary he certainly was and there might be many more people holding the same view. The man, as an orthodox Hindu, could

have mildly refused to accept the bread as a forbidden food to him, instead of showing his abhorrence for it in such an unpleasant manner But he deserved some consideration when one would take account of his awful mental condition caused by the bitter suffering from hunger that might have led him to feel annoyed by such an unacceptable offer.

There is, however, something very significant in both these cases. It is their unflinching spirit of loyalty to the Hindu tradition. If others like to call it fanaticism they have the right to do so, but the Hindus have reasons to look at it from a different angle.

The Hindus of the above kind come from the masses. They are mostly illiterate, owing to their extreme poverty and to many other unfortunate circumstances in the country. But they do not seem to be quite ignorant. For they know how to maintain their stand and even indirectly to show where educated Hindus like ourselves are not doing the right thing. It is to their spirit of loyalty that the Hindu civilization owes its strength to survive. They are its main pillars. Their belief may be simple

and unsophisticated, but their heart is sincere and their mind is fixed. Most of us being the fruits of an alien system of education have learnt much, rather too much, and have chosen to become cultural sceptics. There are even some 'learned idiots' among us who would feel ashamed to call themselves Hindus. But those of the illiterate masses have not been affected as yet through our infection. They proudly follow their own tradition. Some superstitions might have entered into it or some customs might have become quite antiquated, still they adhere to them without listening to any criticism whatsoever. This may be, indeed is, an obstacle to progress, but given proper education along national line by true Hindu scholars who enjoy their confidence they will surely understand and accept the reform. Perhaps it is not as bad to hold to worn-out things and superstitions of a civilization along with itself until a true reformer arises and gives a convincing explanation to the effect that changes are needed solely in its own interests, as it is to respond to false reformers or blind alien critics who are rarely concerned

about the preservation of its internal strength to maintain its proud position intact. It is quite natural for a most ancient civilization like ours to have things in it which have outlived their uses and which may turn out to be even obstacles to its healthy growth. But let not these be the excuse for the aliens, who have little love and no respect for it, to become our cultural dictators in any sense. If that day ever comes in the life of a subject people when the alien rulers and their cultural fellows assume its cultural leadership along with the political, its fate is sealed for ever. Politics is not as very essential a part of Hinduism as it is of some other culture systems. It does not have to be so where the life of a people is governed chiefly by high moral idealism. In fact it touches only the superficial aspect of the Hindu life. With their political authority lost to others the Hindus can still manage to maintain their self-respect, for their culture which represents their common soul asserts its own independence. As long as no people of an alien civilization succeed in assuming the power over the common soul of the Hindus there is hope enough for them.

This is why although they have been under the political domination of others for over a thousand years they have not lost themselves. By saving their civilization they have saved the greatest source of their power and self-respect. If the illiterate barber dared to disagree with me in such a spirit of self-confidence, although he already knew that I was a university professor, from where did he acquire such inward strength ?—If the poor Hindu could show to a man of the ruling race so much self-pride even when he was facing death through long starvation, from where did he get the spirit ?—From their civilization for which they had their deepest feeling of love. The masses consisting mainly of such people have this feeling. It is a healthy feeling, indeed, in spite of its occasional odious manifestations which they would learn to control with the progress of a national system of education among them. Let not this feeling be disturbed until Hinduism has its brighter days again.

For such disturbance will invariably make them more and more pliable to the misleading temptations of our cultural aggressors who are

ever ready to seize any opportunity to weaken the cause of Hinduism. They have nothing in their present state of political subjection and economic destitution—really nothing except this golden pride in their cultural heritage—to give their lives some importance and make them condemn all such temptations which are far outweighed by the happiness they derive from that pride. It will be a real calamity, both for them and for their civilization, if they are led away from it.

They find much courage and strength in them to hold to their own if the educated Hindus show some sympathy for them. The indifference of the latter in matters pertaining to their civilization at this time, when the alien civilization has been advertising itself in every gorgeous form of flirting commercialism, cannot be supported any longer on the excuse of Hindu 'liberalism.' They owe a clear duty to their less fortunate cultural fellows to see that the latter's love for their civilization is accompanied by an intelligent conception of the things and practices which

go by its name and to keep the general atmosphere in which they live as perfectly unresponsive as possible to the subtle persuasions of the alien cultural forces.

All this is very necessary. The greatest danger to a civilization is the psychological change on the part of its votaries. We cannot afford to forget it. Perhaps a little fanaticism in the illiterate masses at this time of our cultural crisis is not bad altogether, for it serves as an antidote against all mischievous propaganda and rude attack of the cultural aggressors.

After all, the Hindus can never be as fanatical as others. Neither their ideal nor their tradition will ever suggest or support it. They have no catechism of hatred, no divine urge for the sword, and no jealous god to incite. Their fanaticism cannot go, perhaps, beyond holding their own as the best on earth because it is theirs. Strictly speaking it would be a deep feeling of unquestioning loyalty rather than fanaticism—its corresponding equivalent, in the educated Hindus, being a rational conviction for their civilization. But it must

not be allowed to assume any aggressive or overtly violent form of any sort of cultural irredentism—something which is neither consistent with nor conducive to the spirit of Indian civilization. It should express itself in the masses rather in their being too proud of their civilization to feel interested in any other.

The chief motive involved in this spirit is to prevent any imposition of the alien civilization or its enslaving infatuation from overtaking any of the people. Such a spirit in them has its sobering influence upon the cultural sceptics and even upon some of our cultural renegades. For any mass practice, long continued, has its favourable psychological impression upon them too in the same manner as a long propaganda on a particular matter has. When the masses are imbued with a firm and confident spirit to demonstrate and enjoy their loyalty to their civilization, the sceptical classes do not feel comfortable in being long unresponsive to this spirit with which their daily lives have their unavoidable contact.

It is thus one of the most important tasks of the leaders of Hinduism to see that this

spirit remains perfectly alive in the masses. And the task becomes even far greater in importance if by masses one means here all those who are actually living within the Hindu community as well as those of our neglected countrymen who are still living in tribes eagerly trying to imbibe things of our civilization and have been waiting to be reclaimed to the full membership of the community. The latter class are the "exterior Hindus," our own sturdy kith and kin, whose active participation in our community life would be a strong impetus to Hinduism and should not, at least on that account, be denied even a day longer. Such social recognition is an immediate necessity, no less than a duty, in the vital interests of Hinduism. No pains should be spared to educate the orthodox elements of our society on this matter so that no obstinate meanness or false fear may overcome their better sense. If there be still any internal opposition, it would come only from the so-called privileged classes, whose numerical strength being very little when compared to the vast suffering masses can hardly maintain a long opposition

to form any great problem within the social body. At any rate, the speed of success in this direction depends much upon how wisely, tactfully, and perseveringly the leaders can handle the situation.

The educated Hindus cannot wholly isolate themselves from the spirit of the masses. In fact they have no less of it than the latter. But it seems to express itself either in their defence of the Indian civilization, or in their criticism of the Western, or in both.

The mildest form of defence consists in the presentation of Hindu ideas and ideals through some Western method and form of expression. The exposition is done with great care and ingenuity so as to make it stand on its own ground before the critical mind of the foreigner. Usually it is among those educated Hindus, who are directly or indirectly dependent for their livelihood upon the favour of the ruling race, that we find this spirit cultivated in that limited manner. Most of them being in the Government employ have to consider carefully the susceptibilities of the ruling people whose recognition has a great utilitarian

value for them. On the whole, however, it is a sober spirit which quietly serves as a counteracting force against the mischievous propaganda of our cultural enemies.

A more courageous form of defence is taken up by some others. They feel very seriously the unjust attack upon Hinduism and, irrespective of what their personal fate may be, undertake to defend it not only by a vigorous explanation of the points of misunderstanding but also by publicly exposing the unscrupulous motive of the alien aggressors. Their work is generally very stimulating to the educated masses including the cultural sceptics who find in it something to make them re-search their minds.

There is a third group of educated Hindus who are engaged in a critical and comparative study of things Western in order to expose their darker side which the alien propagandists in general do not want the Indians to know. They reveal a very superior capacity in studying the facts and ideas of the Western people and in presenting things which are exceedingly prejudicial to the

much vaunted greatness of the West. The emergence of this group is only a recent fact. Formerly it was difficult to find Hindus with necessary equipments to take to any severe criticism of things Western. Indeed they had very little preparation for it. If there were some people who could show enough courage even under extremely adverse political conditions, they could not gather the necessary information about the West to maintain any critical undertaking. The main source of such information had long been the very aliens who wanted the Indians to know them as a highly superior race, if not somewhat like angels, and their things as noble as next to the divine. An education for a long time along that line had its powerful spell which the Indians, as a subject people, could not break so easily. A few of them, who had the opportunity to visit the supposedly golden land of their rulers, saw things under that spell and hugged them with the blind zeal of perfect cultural slaves. But the spell could not last long, at least for some of those who had close personal contact with things Western.

Slowly there came in them the inevitable disillusionment, and the reaction began. Thus there have been some Hindus who want to break the old degrading spell by opening the eyes of the Indians to many false pretensions of the aliens. Their work serves the double purpose of putting the alien aggressors in their proper place, at least in the minds of the Indians, and of helping the propagandised Hindus to reaffirm their confidence in Hinduism. They are, however, still very few in number and have not yet been able to constitute a real force. But they deserve popular encouragement to carry on their work much vigorously and more extensively, and to see that it becomes impressive enough to assume an overwhelming power.

While our cultural struggle continues in this manner, we should not fail to recognize our Western sympathisers and appreciate their sincere disapprobation of the unwisdom of imposing the Western civilization upon the Indians. Mr. Cotton of the Indian Civil Service admitted as early as in 1885 that English education had " encouraged in the minds of many

educated natives an undisguised contempt for the simple faith of their forefathers," "a tendency to exaggerate the value of modern at the expense of the ancient achievements," and "to undermine the social feelings of attachment, obedience, reverence for age, and respect for ancestors." Though an Englishman himself he could not deny that all these were real evils. Meredith Townsend realized what these evils meant to India. With the eye of a truly wise man he saw that "the Europeanized Indian ceases, for all good purposes, to be an Indian at all."

The last Great War has made many Western people sceptical about the inner value of the Western civilization. Mr. J. H. Nicholson, a reputed British author and traveller, calls this sceptical mood pessimism. He affirms that "it must be admitted that among Europeans themselves there is a wide-spread pessimism with regard to the bases of their own civilization." They cannot conceal any longer the impotence of their civilization to resolve its problems which are fast becoming a danger to itself. There is an increasing tendency now

to turn to the East for wisdom and guidance. Evidently, all this cannot fail to exert its influence upon those who are interested in British connection with India. Some of them openly deplore the fact of what may be called deculturising the Indians. Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald says, "In one's wanderings in India one too frequently comes across a regal palace glowing in white marble, beautiful in all the traceries and designs of Mogul architecture, whose great halls, however, are furnished with cracked furniture from Tottenham Court Road, and whose vast walls are hung with dirty pictures from Salon. That is what we have done to the Indian mind. We have not only made it despise its own culture and throw it out; we have asked it to fill up the vacant places with furniture which will not stand the climate. The mental Eurasianism that is in India is appalling. Such minds are nomad. They belong to no civilization, no country, and no history. They create a craving that cannot be satisfied, and ideals that are unreal, they falsify life. They deprive men of the nourishment of their cultural past, and the substitutes they supply are unsubstantial."

If I am quoting especially the British authors, although other Western nations too have great sympathy for India, it is because Britain is mainly responsible for India's present cultural problem and it is good that this has been admitted by some of the respectable British thinkers themselves. But we should pay our deep regard to all such sympathetic thinkers, whether of Britain or of other parts of the world, and try to popularise their writings among all nations. Our cultural aggressors never fail to capitalize, through their world-wide organization, even the simplest thing that serves to hurt, in some way or other, the cause of our civilization. Should there be an unknown Hindu, almost a nobody in India, who can be led to attack Hinduism, they will try to give him every possible importance and spread his views far and wide. It is in this way that some of the ordinary Indian converts have swelled up to disproportionate greatness. And who cannot understand how the scandalous book of Katherine Mayo has become abundantly available in every part of the civilized world? I have recently visited

many countries in the Far East and in Europe, and wherever I went—to a school or to a public library or to a good book-store—I saw its inevitable presence. I have had the acquaintance of many educated persons in these countries, almost all of whom have seen, so I was told, if not wholly read this pernicious book. The alien aggressors fully recognize the importance of such propaganda in moulding the world opinion against our civilization. But we have failed so far, to our great misfortune, to popularise the thoughts of our Western sympathisers not only among other nations but even among ourselves. It is a highly noble feeling which urges them to sound their voice of warning against a palpable injustice, even though its perpetrators may be their own kith and kin and its victims a far distant race of men. By publicly appreciating their noble feeling we not only give them the recognition which they rightly deserve but also express our grateful conviction that the Western people are not composed only of scheming aggressors or blind cultural iconoclasts, but that it consists also of highly great souls

whose love for their own culture and civilization is not a menace but a security to the culture and civilization of a different people. Since they belong to the ruling race their sympathetic ideas have peculiar value to the Hindus who feel inspired to reinforce their old cultural faith. And have not their ideas also an immense power to dissolve the world prejudice which has been caused by the vile propaganda of the aggressors?

There are thus many good signs of encouragement for the Hindus to carry on their cultural struggle to a successful end. But the aggressors are also very powerful, thanks to certain obvious reasons and especially to their highly efficient organization. The task of defence has by no means been an easy one. It is true the Hindus have a long history which includes glorious victories in their past cultural struggles and hence supplies a great moral strength firmly to push on their work of resistance. But the aggressors have also a resourceful past. They are connected with an ancestry which brought about the destruction of the great Roman civilization. That

ancient success has its inspiration as well as instruction for them. It is not wisdom on the part of the Hindus to be unconcerned about the resources of the aggressors.

Besides, the impact of the Mohammedan culture, even in its Indianised form, is still felt by the Indian civilization as a lingering problem yet to be completely solved. Indeed this problem is like a canker eating into the vitality of the Indian people and is preventing the Indian civilization from concentrating all its energy against the forces of Western aggression. Yet, with all its former aggressiveness the Mohammedan culture has been very much acclimatised in India. There has long been a silent but wholesome process of mutual infiltration of the two cultures, Hindu and Mohammedan, while their respective followers have been seriously seeking, and sometimes even shamelessly fighting, to dissolve their petty differences before coming to a complete unity under a satisfactory readjustment. When one remembers the common history of the Hindus and the Mohammedans in India for more than a millennium, their living

closely as immediate and useful neighbours of one another, their mutual recognition of different customs and traditions, their common sufferings which evoke their mutual sympathy, and their common aspiration to make India, their sacred motherland, as happy, prosperous, powerful, and honourable as any great country on earth, one can honestly wonder why proper means could not be devised to settle the question satisfactorily for all time. India never failed in the past to produce leaders of profound wisdom successfully to tackle her social and cultural problems. Should she fail now ? Something must be done without delay to heal the cankerous sore called communal problem and to let India be strong enough to prevent the Western cultural aggression from becoming a sad calamity Perhaps her long history has its precious instruction to give us some guidance in this respect. Perhaps our civilization had similar days of struggle with the powerful Dravidian civilization which it finally had to receive within its wide scope to let the Dravidians be completely united with the Aryans. It might be that the proud Aryans had to make

certain compromises, even to yield from their high cultural standpoint in achieving a complete adjustment and unity with the Dravidians, but the pressing exigencies of the time required that they should do so in the interest of their civilization. Cannot something similar be done in the present somewhat analogous problem of commual adjustment ? This problem, of course, has its additional difficulty in the fact that, unlike the Dravidian civilization, Mohammedanism has its source of inspiration not within India but outside. This one difficulty has its apparently insurmountable nature, but all the same our leadership should rise to the occasion with the requisite wisdom to tackle it successfully.

We should remember that our Aryan forefathers, in that ancient time, showed great wisdom and farsightedness in achieveing that cultural adjustment which gave it enough strength subsequently to overthrow the cultural aggression of the Greek conquerors. Had they failed to do so and thus allowed the clàsh of the two great indigenous cultures to continue for many a hundred years even when India fell

into the hands of the Greeks, it would have been easy for the latter, within four hundred years of their domination, to finish their work of cultural destruction and permanently make India a cultural slave of Greece. If we feel proud of our great forefathers who succeeded in completely wiping out all vestiges of Greek cultural imposition and in thus maintaining intact the glory of our ancient civilization, we should not forget the lessons they have for us in our present state of cultural crisis.

The question here is, do we mean to see that our history repeats itself in our dealing with the Western civilization? Should we reject everything of it in the same manner as our forefathers rejected of the Greek civilization ?

In order to find the answer for itself, the question requires an explanation of the real nature of our cultural problem. Perhaps there are foreigners who do not understand why India should be so much against the Western civilization when she can see many other countries of the world adopting things of the Western civilization to make them great and powerful. They know that the Indians highly

admire Japan for her great achievements which she has been able to make by introducing many things from the West. Even recently Turkey has been doing the same thing to make herself a great nation. It seems, therefore, rather strange that India, seeing all this right before her eyes, should still be against the Western civilization. Such foreigners have only misunderstood the Indians and their problem. What the Indians, especially the Hindus, have been struggling against is the imposition of the Western civilization upon India by the Western people. It would be mere substitution of truth if anybody denies that the Western civilization is being imposed upon them, for then their opposition to it would be meaningless. Now, this imposition is in itself morally very injurious to them. In fact every act of imposition is an act of enslavement. It involves no freedom of choice on the part of one upon whom something is imposed. Of all kinds of slavery the cultural kind is the most unfortunate, for it affects the very soul of the people and turns them into aping machines.

There has been no imposition of the Western civilization upon Japan. The Japanese have never allowed any foreign people to come to Japan to teach them about it. They do not want to be taught, they want to learn about it themselves. They have taken from the Western civilization what they like and not what others want them to like. Their freedom of choice remains intact in all their cultural adoption and it would be wrong on the part of the Western people even to think that in Japan's present greatness lies their cultural influence. This is quite a plain and well-known fact. Still let me quote here the famous English author Meredith Townsend who says, "We are told everyday how Europe has influenced Japan, and forget that the change in those islands is entirely self-generated, that Europeans did not teach Japan, but that Japan of herself chose to learn from Europe methods of organization, civil and military, which have so far proved successful. That is not exactly 'influence,' unless, indeed, England is 'influenced' by purchasing tea of China. Where is the European apostle or philosopher or

statesman, or agitator who has re-made Japan ?"

The same is true of Turkey. No foreign people is imposing the Western civilization upon her. The Turks go out to the different countries of the West and learn not what the Western people would like to teach them but what they think they should learn. And it is remarkable that in this freedom of choice they are rarely found to agree with the Western preachers in choosing things of the Western civilization.

The Hindus are not mere children in the school of civilization. They have far longer and greater experience in it than any other people on earth. Compared with them their Western aggressors are like cultural babies making a lot of noise about the very limited knowledge which they acquired only yesterday and much of which comes originally from the former. There is no wonder if such Hindus refuse to take lessons in civilization from their self-appointed teachers who will yet take a long time to understand the value of the highly tested elements of the Indian civiliza-

tion. It is culturally anomalous, psychologically repelling, morally degrading, and spiritually deadening for the Hindus to be taught about civilization by those foreigners whose vision of things still rests like that of children, upon the glowing surface while the truth dwells in the depth far beyond their ken. Let this forced cultural tutelage be stopped and the problem will disappear. Let the Hindus learn about the Western civilization themselves and let them have their freedom to take from it whatever they want. If Japan could rise to be a great power in less than fifty years by using her own freedom in learning about the Western civilization, India with that freedom can certainly be even a greater power in much less time. It is such a sad thing that she has to face a cultural crisis at a time when she should be strengthening and enriching her civilization with whatever she can make at home as well as take from abroad.

India will get over her present crisis as she did her past ones. Her struggle cannot end until her great civilization is reinstated to its own pristine glory. She cannot adjust

herself to any indignity of cultural imposition.

Neither can she wait for the time of her complete cultural reassertion to reconstruct and repair the damaged structure of her civilization. Her experience of the past as well as of the present struggles enables her to see which parts of the structure are comparatively weak and which particular materials from abroad can make it proof against all bad weathers and unexpected storms. In all her importations she must always remember that it is the question of necessity and not that of choice which is involved therein. As a necessity such importations have only a temporal and instrumental value for us. These should be taken only as a means to a great end which consists in preserving the fundamental values of our civilization. Let none of the foreign cultural importations ever aspire to take the place of any of our fundamental values which have acquired, through hard tests of many thousand years, their supreme position in our civilization. Here is a warning for us from an English thinker, the author of *The Remaking*

of Nations, "I left India profoundly convinced that, for India herself, the acceptance of Western values and criteria would be a disaster. For nations, no less than for individuals, who set themselves a task which contradicts their nature, there must be a nemesis."

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INDEX